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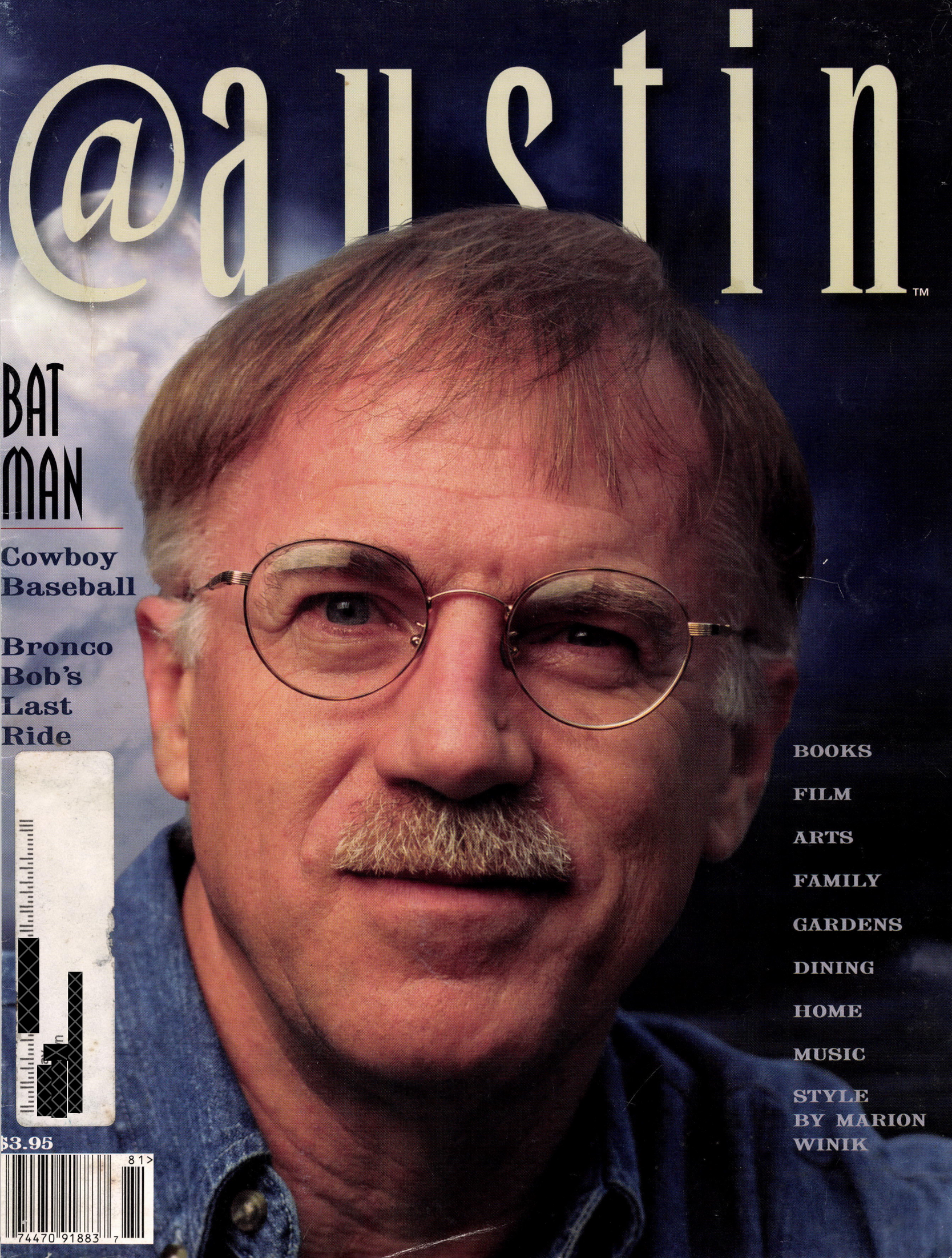

BAT MAN

Cowboy Baseball

Bronco Bob's Last Ride

BOOKS

FILM

ARTS

FAMILY

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DINING

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BY MARION WINIK

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From the Editor

When we started last summer, I said this magazine was about dreams. In this issue, Ken Chambers ("Bat Man," p. 30) tells us about Merlin Tuttle, who made a career—and spent a lifetime—studying and protecting bats. Chambers' career as a writer has led him from the stockyards and rodeo arenas of West Texas, to the shrimp boats of the Gulf Coast, to the boardrooms of one of the world's largest computer corporations.

Bob Brown ("Bronco Bob's Last Ride," p. 39) tells us about a 14 year old who needed to be a cowboy for a couple of years. Like the teenager in his story, Brown has changed horses, and wardrobes, more than once: musician, antiques dealer, television executive, and short story writer.

In researching Kokernot Field for three years, former Doubleday editor Rob Earp ("Cowboy Baseball," p. 35) discovered one man's dream helped others realize their own. In the process, he uncovered a "hidden national treasure."

Alice Wightman

Letters

@Austin welcomes your comments. Send correspondence to @Austin, *P. O. Box 5307, Austin, TX 78763 or e-mail to editor@austinmagazine.com. Letters must include your name, address, and daytime telephone number and may be edited for length and clarity.*

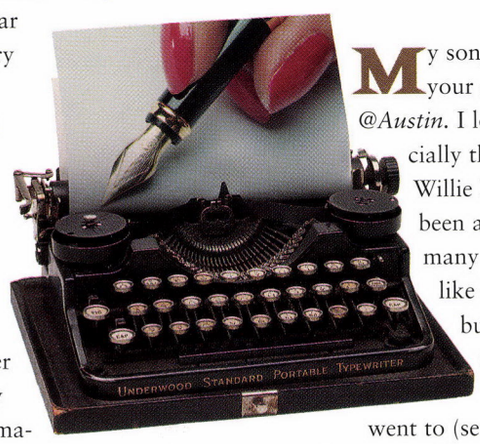
I have only recently returned to Austin after being away for many years. It's hard to believe that the small city I remember has become the metro area your magazine covers. When I was a kid you didn't have to walk very far from the Avenue B Grocery and Deli mentioned in "Hyde Society" to see the edge of town.

I enjoyed, particularly, the article "Springs Eternal." Myrtle Cuthbertson was my mother's childhood friend, and I remember her mother, Mrs. Seiders, very well. Thanks for an informative and enjoyable publication.

Mary N. Sponholtz
Round Rock

What a wonderful magazine! It is such a pleasure and such a surprise to see great writing and great graphics in a magazine that celebrates Austin the right way. I live in Houston but travel to Austin a lot. A substantial part of me wishes I could stay there longer. Your magazine reminds me why.

Thanks,
Bob Sussman
Houston



My son, Rick, sent me your magazine, *@Austin*. I loved it, especially the article on Willie Nelson. I've been a fan of his for many years. I don't like the long hair but enjoy his singing style. Last winter I went to (see him in) a pasture somewhere around Austin, with a big fence around it, and it was 42 degrees. Well, I stood it till half time. I was freezing. We were covered up with three quilts and still cold.

He's the *greatest* artist of this century. Everyone knows Willie. Love to meet him.

Marie Perkins
Longview

@austin

Volume One, Issue Three

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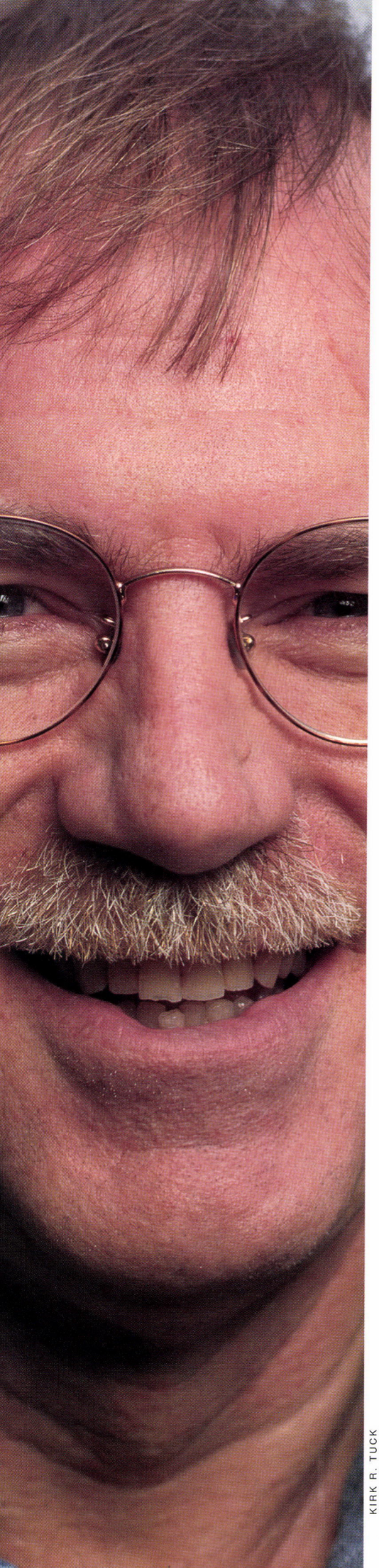

KIRK R. TUCK

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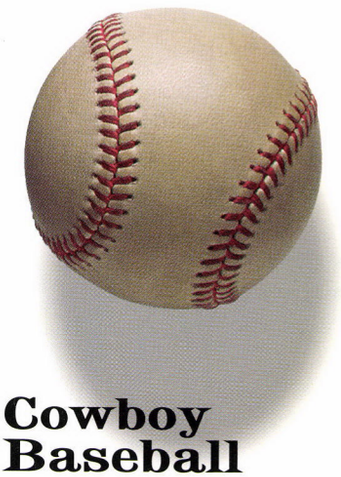
features

Bat Man

by Ken Chambers. Merlin Tuttle, a life well spent. **30**

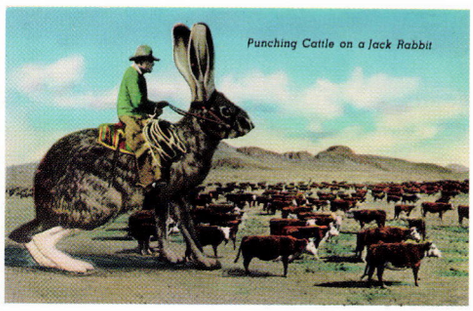


Cowboy Baseball

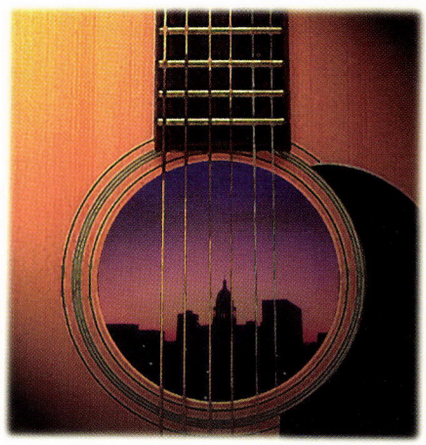
by Rob Earp. A real-life field of dreams. **35**

Bronco Bob's Last Ride

by Bob Brown. A short story. **39**



departments



Short Takes

Artificial moonlight; no limit; going underground; moving up; silence is golden. **6**

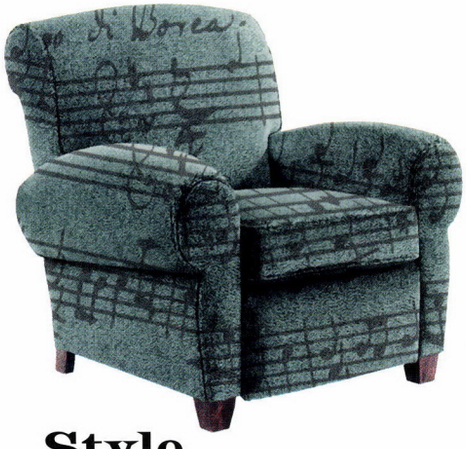
Books

by Barbara Bohman. Great Books. Good friends. **11**

stin

Film

by Karl Pallmeyer. **Cinema Paradiso.** Something old, something new. **13**



Style

by Marion Winik. **Home Redux.** Tinker belles. **15**

Visual Arts

by Madeline Irvine. **New Directions.** Form equals function. **17**

Music

by Steve Brooks. **Just Folks.** Voice in the desert. **20**

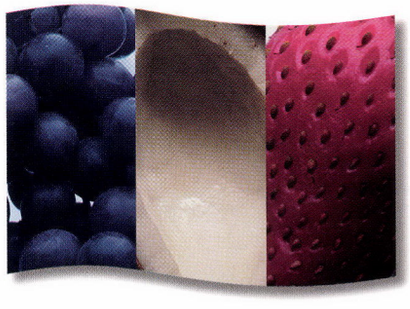
Family

by David Gaines. **Kind of a Drag.** My private Guadalupe. **22**

Gardens

by Erin Hynes.

Expansionist Plot. Seeds of construction. **24**



Dining

by Diane Payton Gomez and Diana Welsch. **Multiple Choice.** Adventures in dining. **26**

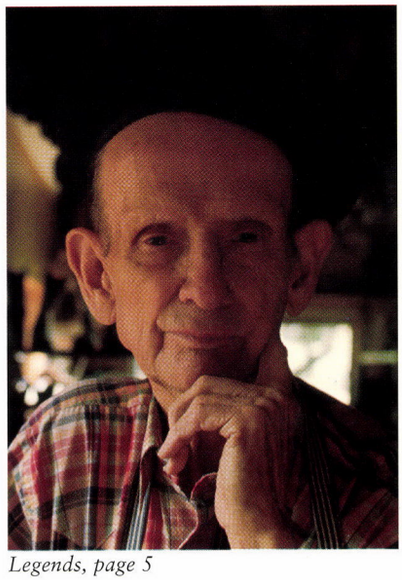
Home

by Marie-Claire Quittelier.

Souper Chicken. Something to crow about. **28**

etcetera

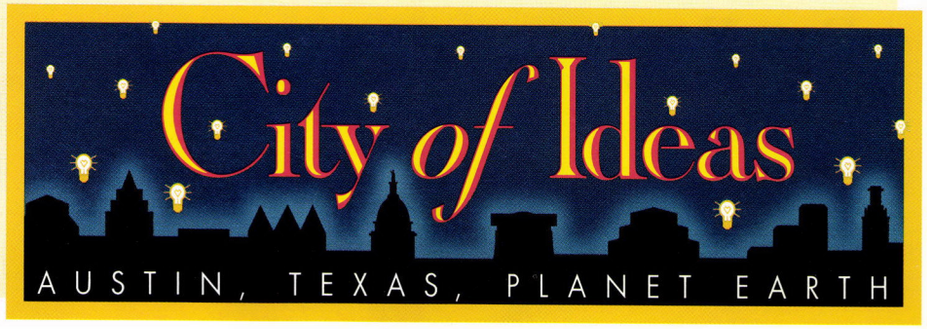
LETTERS	**1**
FOOD & DINING	**49**
ON EXHIBIT	**52**
MUSEUMS	**53**
ON THE TOWN	**58**
LAST WORD	**64**

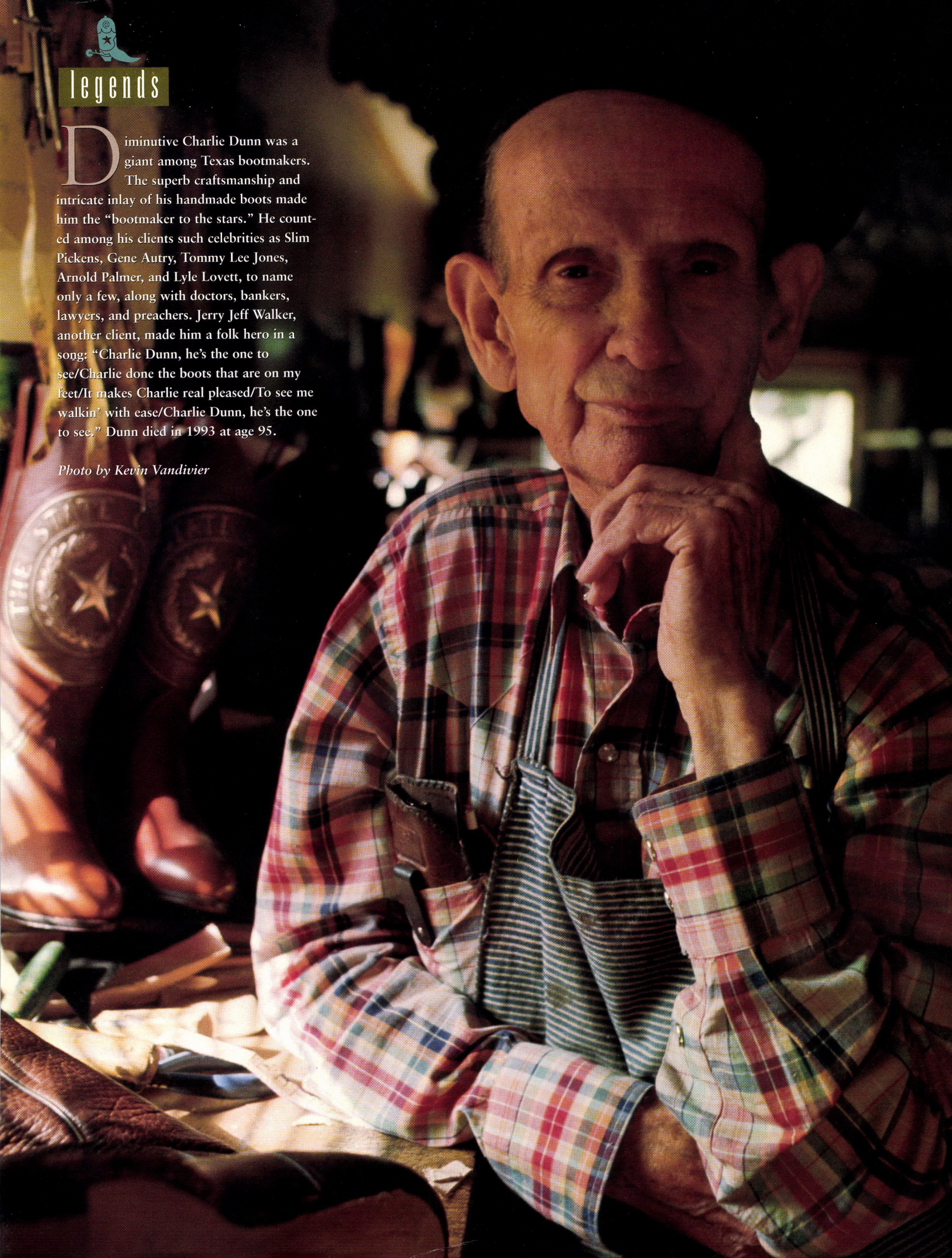


Legends, page 5

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Maybe that should read "*Where's* the big idea?" Then the answer would be easy: Austin. Our city is the city of ideas. And it is with this concept in mind that Reagan National Advertising, in collaboration with GSD&M Advertising and TateAustin launch a campaign to call Austin "City of Ideas." In our view it beats the heck out of apples in New York, lights in Paris and, yes, even cars in Detroit because ideas are permanent, ongoing entities. Ideas in Austin are as loud as our music, as celebrated as our entrepreneurs and as educated as our universities. To call Austin "City of Ideas" speaks to the heart of a community that embraces its diversity, protects its environment and encourages new business. Austin is not a city of lights. It is a city of *light.* A city of ideas.





legends

Diminutive Charlie Dunn was a giant among Texas bootmakers. The superb craftsmanship and intricate inlay of his handmade boots made him the "bootmaker to the stars." He counted among his clients such celebrities as Slim Pickens, Gene Autry, Tommy Lee Jones, Arnold Palmer, and Lyle Lovett, to name only a few, along with doctors, bankers, lawyers, and preachers. Jerry Jeff Walker, another client, made him a folk hero in a song: "Charlie Dunn, he's the one to see/Charlie done the boots that are on my feet/It makes Charlie real pleased/To see me walkin' with ease/Charlie Dunn, he's the one to see." Dunn died in 1993 at age 95.

Photo by Kevin Vandivier

SHORT TAKES

KEVIN DELAHUNTY

Austin Moon Shine

Night Light

The streets, which have for so many weeks been steeped in utter darkness, were as bright as day.—Austin Daily Statesman, *May 4, 1895*

At first, you don't see the delicate ornamental towers against the blue sky. You have to look for them to know they're there. Then, gradually one comes into view: a moonlight tower. Nine steel cables brace a 2.5-ton, 15-story cast-iron frame. On top is a cluster of bulbs, radiating downward on metal arms, whose pale blue light mimics the moon at night. Once a popular form of outdoor lighting at the turn of the century, the moonlight towers in Austin are the last of their type in the United States. Originally 30 towers graced the city, but storms, construction, traffic accidents, even a tornado diminished their number to 17.

"From the distance as you approach Austin, mounting the crest of one of the seven hills you notice the silvery lights that cluster like fireflies around the Capitol dome ... the unique 'moonlight towers' have delighted visitors and residents 100 years," reads a tourist brochure by the city's chamber of commerce. Coffeehouse conversation has it the towers were built around the Capitol in the shape of a star, but no one could tell because nothing was taller in those days.

The City of Austin made a deal with the Fort Wayne (Indiana) Electric Company to build the state-of-the-art lighting system that would mark the inauguration of a new electric department and the first city-wide use of electricity. At the time only Detroit, Michigan, had the same system of lighting. So in its contract, Austin stipulated that "if you have good eyesight and an ordinary watch and cannot see to read the time of night within 1,500 feet of the Tower, the Company will remove the Towers at the Company's expense."

Only a few years before a cash-poor State of Texas had swapped millions of acres of West Texas land to build a new Capitol. Perhaps following that lead, the City of Austin gave the electric company a narrow-gauge railroad—that had hauled granite from Marble Falls to the Capitol and to the first dam across the Colorado—to build the towers for $70,000 instead of their full price.

The first tower was completed in May, 1895, and the others were built by the end of that year. The first one, erected in Hyde Park, was greeted by a large, cheering crowd, but it was not without controversy. Some residents worried the constant daylight would cause plants to grow without rest and hens to lay eggs 24 hours a day. Others worried they'd need saws to harvest corn and beans. None of their concerns was justified.

This state-of-the-art lighting system required daily maintenance. A workman had to visit each tower by horse and buggy to trim the filaments of their carbon-arc lamps, a new invention. To reach the top, he used a one-man elevator—much like a dumb-waiter—to hoist himself up the center pole. Afterwards, he would turn on the lights from

a switch at the base. This daily routine continued until the city replaced the lamps, first, with incandescent lights, then, mercury vapor lamps—precisely forty-one years after the first tower was erected. During World War II, a central switch was engineered to turn off all the towers at one time in case of an enemy attack.

Despite "Danger" and "Warning" signs, some children and many students have tried to scale the towers (the writer's own grandson among them), but few succeeded. A smooth steel pole rises in the center for fifteen feet. Where it ends, a ladder with steps as narrow as a child's shoe goes outside of the frame to the top. It's a hazardous climb; workmen have died trying. In 1930 the story of an eleven-year-old boy who survived a fall was reported in Ripley's "Believe It or Not." More recently, a moonlight tower was featured in Richard Linklater's movie, *Dazed and Confused*. A mock-up was built for the actors to climb on because the real thing was considered too dangerous.

The "soft moonbeam effect" of Austin's unique moonlight towers is certain to continue—all 17 were refurbished in time for a 1995 centennial, extending their lives another 50 to 75 years. Their mystique, however, is in danger of fading. As the city grows at an unprecedented rate, the harsh glare of modern-day street lights drowns out this "artificial moonlight" the same way it gradually swallows the stars.

—*Georgia Earnest Klipple*

Upper Limits

City Lineup

Over the past twenty years, I have spent no less than 400 hours—over two-and-a-half weeks of my waking life—warming the pavement outside the offices of KLRU, Austin's public television station. What my persistence earned me was access—over 125 times and counting—in Studio 6A, home of the award-winning PBS music program *Austin City Limits*. Spending no more than my own time, I've been able to take in live performances by some of the greatest names in American folk, blues, country, gospel, and bluegrass music—for free.

B. B. King? I was there. Tammy Wynette? Loved her. Stevie Ray? More than once. Willie Nelson? Lost count. The creative genius of these titans of tone and harmony and others like Leonard Cohen, Nanci Griffith, and the Neville Brothers, their technical virtuosity, the power of their performances, are the bottom-line reasons I have queued-up, over and over, for so many years. For me and a coterie of like-minded fans—a mishmash of lawyers and librarians, slackers and slough-offs, bartenders and bureaucrats—being on the inside when that studio juke joint is jumping is the quintessential experience in "The Live Music Capital of the World."

Tickets are available, two per person, at no cost to anyone with the gumption to ask for them. But the number varies widely from one show to the next. And don't think that getting them is like pulling up to the drive-thru for an order to go. To get the coveted Space Available ticket, which is no guarantee of admission, you have to want it, and you have to stand in line—twice—sometimes for hours. This is not for the faint of heart. Each line—the first to pick up a ticket and the second for admission—has its own protocol.

Except on rare occasions, tickets are handed out precisely at eight in the morning outside the front doors of the KLRU offices, severe weather notwithstanding. The queue winds through the lobby of the building next door during a thunderstorm; otherwise, it's an open-air affair.

There is no way to predict how long you have to wait. Sometimes fifteen minutes is all it takes; other days, you won't be one of the lucky ones after more than an hour. How early you go is inversely proportional to how bad you want to see whoever's playing. Walk up at 7:55 a.m. and your odds are better with Publishers Clearinghouse.

DAVID TIMMONS/ AUSTIN CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

My ritual for must-see shows, refined over the years, is practically fail-safe. It's based on the premise: go early, be happy. I hit the sack with my alarm and the Mr. Coffee set for six a.m. Thirty minutes later I am on my way to campus, armed with a Thermos of fresh java and the morning paper. At this hour, most people are hitting their snooze alarms.

Last time only eleven people and one dog were lined up in front of me—I am guaranteed a spot unless there's an extraordinary request for a bundle of tickets by a local big-wig or visiting dignitary. More people arrive in a trickle.

The line at night on show days is also a numbers game. Space Available ticket-holders are admitted only after another line of fans—all holding guaranteed admission tickets—are inside the building. Like an airline, the people with Space Available tickets are those who risk getting bumped. The farther back in line, the greater the odds you'll hear, "Sorry, we're booked."

On show day, I arrive just before six for the eight o'clock show. Everyone grabs a spot on the pavement in what I call the "comfort zone"—the stretch of line toward the front that usually gets a ticket. The scene is lighthearted and festive—something you don't expect in long lines. An informal honor system devel-

oped over many years means I may go for a walk or take in dinner on the Drag without losing my place in line. Most people are happy to be there—or they wouldn't be—so they make the most of it. The payoff is just around the corner and up six flights of stairs.

I've had my share of thrills, some of them better than the music. Take the time in 1977 when I made my national TV debut twirling and swinging with my date in a western-style American Bandstand spotlight dance. I saw legendary Texan and network news anchor Dan Rather, a smile stretched coast to coast across his rugged face, cutting loose along with everyone else after hearing a young, scruffy newcomer named Todd Snider. It was a night to remember.

That's why I've gone all these years—without the benefit of clout or connections, without the perks given the V.I.P. or the big donors to PBS. The folks in charge of this Texas institution still find a way for someone like me—a young-at-heart baby-boomer living in Slackertown, USA—to rub shoulders with the likes of coaching legends, publishing magnates, local music bigwigs, media icons, and, on occasion, even the state governor. I do it because I can. It's a treat to be a small part of one of the coolest things Austin has to offer besides millions of bats and Barton Springs.

—Pat Cosgrove

Underground Heroes

Special Effects

KEVIN DELAHUNTY

Every society has a special place to honor the patriots, statesmen, and storytellers who dedicated their lives—and sometimes gave them up—for something greater than themselves. Ancient Egypt had the Valley of the Kings; Spain, El Escorial in Madrid; and Buddhism, the Great Stupa in India. We, too, have a memorial for patriots who gave of themselves for their home state of Texas.

The Texas State Cemetery is the local counterpart to the Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. Here rest heroes of the Texas Revolution, hundreds of Confederate infantrymen and cavalry, and signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. It is the resting place of Civil War heroes, along with statesmen, scoundrels, and pretenders who helped forge the state's colorful history. It is the final home to 2,700 elected and appointed public officials, patriots, Texans recognized by proclamation or resolution, and spouses.

Created in 1851, the cemetery was envisioned as a site for the state's great historical figures, which often meant disinterring such notable men as Stephen F. Austin to bring them there. Underfunded for most of its 147-year history, the cemetery slowly deteriorated. But in 1994 it underwent a three-year, $4.7-million makeover at the behest of Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock. Refurbished, this undiscovered jewel in the heart of the city is an interesting place to learn Texas history.

This wooded, picturesque 18 acres offers a commanding view of the downtown skyline, gravel paths for jogging or walking, a memorial plaza, and reflecting ponds for contemplation.

The main entrance is beneath an enormous Lone Star flag that audibly snaps in a breeze. Guarding the state's most hallowed ground, a monolithic, limestone gateway rises out of the peaceful Eastside neighborhood like a fortress. But it is an inviting fortress. Modeled after the Alamo's Long Barrack, this imposing bunker houses a tourist center and administrative offices instead of munitions and gun emplacements. Inside are interpretive exhibits on other cemeteries in Texas.

Beyond the visitor center is the Crescent Pond, designed for quiet reflection and lined with indigenous plants and boulders brought in from around San Saba. All of the cemetery's new landscaping is native plants. The serene, picturesque beauty all around encourages a leisurely pace. Following the path south a ways reveals the remarkable tomb of Texas General Albert Sidney Johnston, considered one of the South's greatest Civil War heroes. Noted artist Elizabet Ney sculpted the reclining figure of Johnston for his gravesite. Subject to an unquiet journey home, his body was delayed by the Union capture of New Orleans, where he lay until 1866, when he was reinterred at the state cemetery. To the East of Johnston is Confederate Field: row upon row of simple tombstones that mark the resting places of Rebel soldiers and their wives.

The Texas State Cemetery is home to many tales and many ironies. The land that became the cemetery had belonged to Andrew Jackson Hamilton, then a state representative and later the governor who frequented Hamilton Pool. Oddly enough, the much-respected Hamilton isn't buried here, but the much-reviled governor under Reconstruction, Edmund J. Davis, is, under the tallest monument on the grounds.

Other ironies soon become apparent. For instance, here is the monument to Robert Potter, an early patriot and legislator, although he is not buried here or anywhere else for that matter. His body was never recovered after his murder in 1842. Union casualties were buried here for a brief time until they were transferred to a federal cemetery in San Antonio.

The long list of reburials continues with Stephen F. himself (moved from Brazoria County in 1910), Georgia's Joanna E. Troutman (the "Betsy Ross of Texas," who never lived here),

and Louis W. Kemp, the oil company executive who helped relocate noted figures to the cemetery before the 1936 Texas Centennial; he was moved there in 1956.

Two Texas literary giants slumber here as well. Walter Prescott Webb, the eminent historian and writer, died in a car wreck in 1963. His friend and colleague J. Frank Dobie, who brought Texas folklore to the printed page, is close by.

In a brief acknowledgment of cultural diversity, the Plaza de los Recuerdos memorializes noteworthy non-anglo Texans buried elsewhere. Its curving stone wall displays 31 tablets with names and quotes from Texas Native Americans, Hispanics, and Blacks.

Other parks may be larger, but none claims so much history in such a small space. Other states have their heroes, but ours call Austin home. A visit to the state cemetery honors its residents and, in some small part, returns the favor.

—Howie Richey

Located between Navasota and Comal, 7th and 11th streets. Grounds are open seven days a week, 8am–5pm. Visitor Center, open 8am–5pm Monday through Saturday. Guided tours for groups smaller than 40 are available with advance notice. 463-0605.

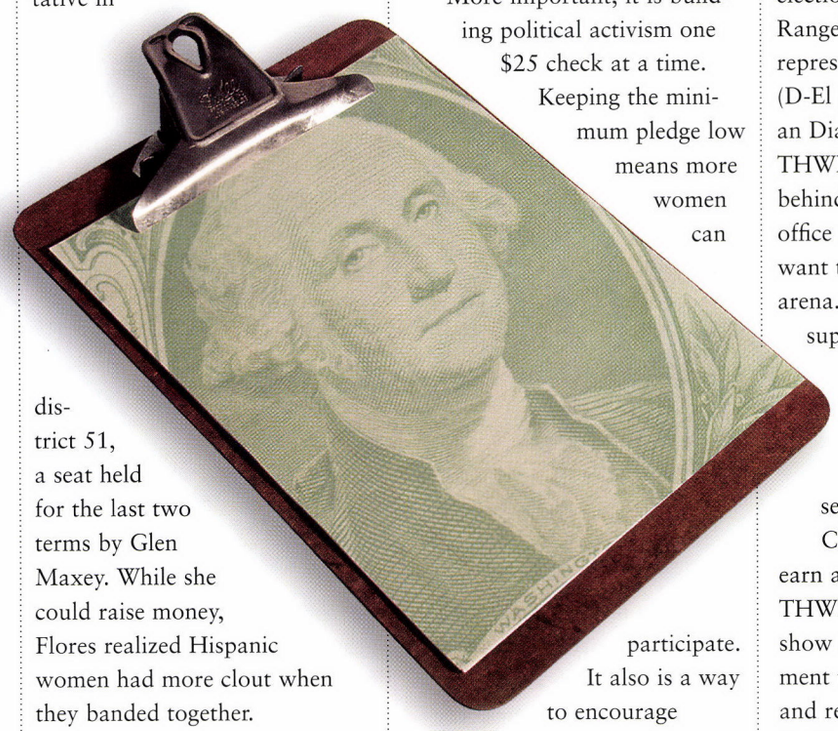
Room at the Top

GETTING THERE

Lulu Flores believes Hispanic women have been the "worker bees" of politics for too long; it is time to move from behind the scenes and run for public office themselves. "Hispanic women are not the ones who are out front as candidates," says Flores. "It's time to promote our own work." To encourage this transition, four years ago she helped create a political action committee, called the Texas Hispanic Women's PAC (THWPAC), to raise money for qualified women candidates.

"One of the obstacles to getting elected is raising money," says Flores, attorney and Assistant Director for Intergovernmental Relations at the Texas Railroad Commission.

Flores knows that firsthand. She has a background in politics that most Hispanic women never know. Her father was tax assessor/collector in Webb County for twenty years. She spent eight years as the chief legislative assistant to State Representative Irma Rangel, a twenty-one-year veteran of the Texas House of Representatives. Her experience with the state political process led her to the State Bar of Texas, where she was Director of Intergovernmental Relations, and then to the railroad commission. She ran twice for state representative in district 51, a seat held for the last two terms by Glen Maxey. While she could raise money, Flores realized Hispanic women had more clout when they banded together.



Patterned after the nationally known "Emily's List," THWPAC raises money and makes endorsements. Like Emily's List, THWPAC solicits dues and contributions from its members and donates to selected candidates. Furthermore, every member agrees to write a minimum of two additional checks for at least $25 each to candidates the group endorses. By bundling these funds, THWPAC has donated $1,000 to a few, select campaigns.

"As an organization, we have to focus. Otherwise, we are everything to everyone, and we don't get anything accomplished," says Flores.

More important, it is building political activism one $25 check at a time. Keeping the minimum pledge low means more women can participate. It also is a way to encourage Hispanic women to try something new. Flores says most women never write checks to a political candidate. "Once you start giving, you realize you can participate—and you start doing it more."

THWPAC concentrates solely on Hispanic women, whom Flores thinks have greater difficulty raising money for political office than men. She believes women have to prove themselves as credible candidates and as minorities. Flores learned that when she ran for office.

The group focuses on municipal, state representative, and school board elections across Texas. Those winning the last election with its support included Rangel (D-Kingsville), first-term representative Norma Chavez (D-El Paso), and two-term veteran Diane Dávila (D-Houston). THWPAC also puts its weight behind candidates to stay in office and supports pioneers who want to break into a particular arena. For example, THWPAC is supporting Gisela Triana in the race for Travis County Justice of the Peace, Precinct Five, because no Hispanic woman has served there before.

Candidates, however, must earn an endorsement from THWPAC. Each one needs to show a grasp of issues, commitment to the Hispanic community, and record of involvement. THWPAC is nonpartisan, but it is pro-choice.

While its membership expands and contracts with the election cycle, THWPAC is poised to grow in size and influence since 1998 is a major election year. The group is still involved in the endorsement process for the upcoming fall elections. Afterwards, it intends to launch a major fundraising effort.

"We've been underrepresented," says Flores. "We want a place at the table."

—James A. Cooley

Silence of the Band

UNDERCURRENTS

A staple of the Austin musical scene, the Asylum Street Spankers offer audiences a unique musical experience. The ten or so members of this unconventional band, who include some of city's top talent, play "unenhanced"—there are no amplifiers, no P.A. system, not a single watt of electricity. Vocalist Christina Marrs says that she knows of no other band in the country following their technology-free style.

At one time, the nationally renowned Squirrel Nut Zippers played without amplifiers, but that has since changed. While the Squirrel Nut Zippers are very popular (also playing pre-rock pop), the Asylum Street Spankers offer a distinctly Austin twist to vintage sounds. Their stage presence and musical style are down home and personable, with a Bluesy, Southern feel.

It's a standing-room-only crowd when they play their mix of pre-rock pop tunes and bawdy, irreverent originals every Wednesday night at the Electric Lounge. Fans and players move closer together so that everyone can hear. The chorus of vocals and stringed instruments creates a spirit that amplification cannot match. Without the din of loud music, you can hear a broad array of subtle musical tones and enjoy a camaraderie that is uncommon in this day and age.

The band took part of its name from the road that once led to the county's psychiatric hospital. "Spanking" is an old-fashion slang term for playing an instrument. The band members definitely enjoy their music. They boast a songlist of several hundred ditties, and the players are dedicated.

In addition to the club scene, music lovers can watch the Spankers perform gospel music every Sunday at La Zona Rosa's gospel brunch (from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.). This a good opportunity for music lovers who want to avoid late night, smoke-filled venues. The gospel brunch is, actually, a popular new concept imported from the Northeast, but the Spankers brought their unique Austin spin to the genre.

"When La Zona Rosa first booked a gospel brunch," says Marrs, "they hired this 'Christian contemporary act' that sang with a karaoke machine. It was driving away more people than it was bringing in, so they hired us. This was back when we knew about four gospel songs. We faked our way through that first gig, but the crowds kept growing, as did our song list."

"Gospel is a genre that everyone can relate to," says Marrs. "In the South especially, this music is our heritage, whatever the religion. It really is feel-good, joyful music whether you hear it at church or while you're having a Bloody Mary at La Zona Rosa. I think it means different things to different people. For some people it's a spiritual thing, and for others it's just pure entertainment."

Songs like "Amazing Grace" and "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" transcend the gospel experience. People of all backgrounds recognize most of these songs. They tap their toes, sing along, and even cry with happiness.

"It's not like a church, where everyone sings along," says Marrs. "But people do get into it. I've seen people who are really touched by the songs."

The eleven-member Asylum Street Spankers play guitars, upright bass, washboard, clarinet, ukulele, drums, kazoos, megaphone, bells, slide whistle, hybrid banjolele, and nose flute (you'll just have to see it). They were formed four years ago when certain members decided to take a break from high-decibel blues, punk, and rock 'n' roll projects. Their more intimate style connects them to their audiences and with genres of music from long ago.

Compact discs include "Spanks for the Memories," "The Asylum Street Spankers, Live," and the four-song "Nasty Novelties" (definitely not for the whole family). No gospel songs have been recorded yet, but the band sings some similar musical styles. Along with standards from the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, the Spankers have recorded original songs that blend with the period, ranging from blues to jazz to country. Subject matter is irreverent, off color, and never without humor and good fun.

The Asylum Street Spankers have been winning local music awards since they started singing together four years ago. Several members have won awards in other bands. Most Spankers, such as guitarist Olivier Giraud, were playing in other bands. Giraud recently left to devote all his time to his Gypsy jazz band, 8-½ Souvenirs. Blues man Guy Forsyth and bassist Kevin Smith also left for other projects. Despite these personnel changes, the spirit of the band remains essentially unchanged. It is bringing in new members who are equally accomplished or who show considerable promise.

"I think we all started this as a chance to have a good time," says vocalist John Dodson, "but it just got bigger than any of us would have believed. We're starting to play nationally, and who knows? Maybe spank music is the wave of the future."

—Neal Kassanoff

books

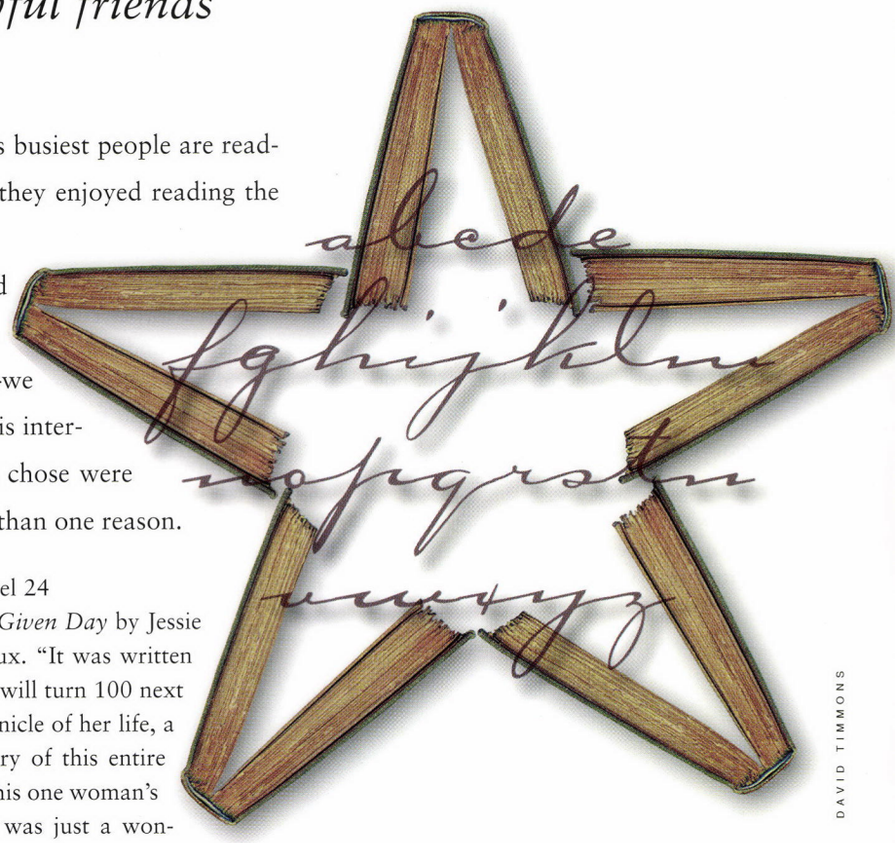
By Barbara Bohman

great books

Faithful friends

Here is a quick look at what some of Austin's busiest people are reading. These are their favorite books of all and one or more they enjoyed reading the most last year.

Sometimes our favorite books are more than just a "good read," they become good friends. It is reassuring in some way that they are on our bookshelves or under our beds—we are comforted by them, stronger because they are nearby. It is interesting that quite a few of the all-time favorites our readers chose were discovered at an early age and are cherished today for more than one reason.



DAVID TIMMONS

Patricia Hayes, President, St. Edward's University

1997: *New and Selected Poems* by Mary Oliver. "Most of her poems are reflections on nature, but they speak very powerfully of human experience ... She clearly understands the struggles of personal development and both the painful and joyful experiences of human community."

All-Time Favorite: *The Divine Milieu* by Teilhard de Chardin. "I discovered Teilhard de Chardin in my 20s. His book gave me the road map for combining faith, experience, and human development. The dense religious language makes the book hard to read, but the central insights are very powerful."

Chuck Meyer, Vice President, Operations, St. David's Medical Center, and author, *Beside the Still Waters* (1997) and the forthcoming *A Good Death: Choices, Challenges and Care Options*

1997: *The Bone Collection* by Jeffrey Deaver. "A real mystery thriller, well crafted. It's really convoluted enough so that I did not have it figured out."

All-Time Favorite: *Cannery Row* by John Steinbeck. "His ability to convey the feelings of his characters—of Doe and the boys—is both entertaining and insightful."

Judy Maggio, news anchor for ABC affiliate KVUE, Channel 24

1997: *On Any Given Day* by Jessie Lee Brown Soveaux. "It was written by a woman who will turn 100 next year ... It's a chronicle of her life, a very engaging story of this entire century through this one woman's life ... The book was just a wonderful experience."

All-Time Favorite: *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. "It's the first book I fell in love with as a child, and I enjoy reading excerpts to my six-year-old daughter now."

Hon. Peter Lowry, Judge, 261st District Court, Travis County

1997: *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy. Lowry admits he has read and reread this book several times because "it's a wonderful story with beautiful prose. I think Cormac McCarthy is one of the best living American writers."

All-Time Favorite: *John Brown's Body* by Stephen Vincent Benèt. "This is a book about the Civil War, novel-length but written in poetry. It was given to me on my 21st birthday by friends and has become not only a favorite book but a favorite possession ... with strong memories."

Chris Cowden, Executive Director, Women & Their Work Gallery

1997: *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. "It won the Booker Prize in England ... It's a magical book, quite moving, quite excellent, very haunting. You remember it."

All-Time Favorite: *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy. "He has such a gift for capturing humanity. The characters speak to eternal issues, making the book timeless. Tolstoy's ability to depict characters—men and women alike—is unparalleled."

John Aielli, host and interviewer, KUT-FM radio's "Eklektikos"

1997: *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* by John Berendt. "The author's use of language is evocative. The point of view he cultivates is so intimate that I felt the vitality of his experience as if it were first-, not second-, hand. This book is alive."

All-Time Favorite: "No such animal. But I did read Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* twice back

when I was 19. It asks questions that can't be answered but that we can't stop asking."

Dr. Mary Robbins, pianist and artistic director, A. Mozart Fest

1997: *Mozart's Letters* translated by Emily Anderson. "Of course, I read a lot of books on Mozart." Thousands of letters exist between members of the Mozart family, and these are fascinating because he had a "fantastic life—evidence of his genius is documented throughout"—and entertaining because of his "unique perspective and sense of humor."

All-Time Favorites: "To be truthful, I don't have an all-time favorite; it keeps changing ... My tastes for reading are perhaps eclectic, ranging from anything by Emily Dickinson to anything by Elie Wiesel, to accounts of pre-Virginia Woolf women *(Violet)*, and food-related writing, such as *The Man Who Ate Everything* by J. Steingarten—very funny!"

Lucy Nazro, Head, St. Andrew's Episcopal School

1997: *My Dog Skip* by Willie Morris. "For anyone who loves their dog, cat, or horse and for anyone who grew up in a small town, this book will bring back those memories of life at its very best."

All-Time Favorite: *My Antonia* by Willa Cather. "The realness and strengths of the female character, Antonia, made her a heroine of mine. Cather is an author who has given me great delight not only in *My Antonia* but also in *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

Glen West, President, Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce

1997: *The Sandlot Game: An Anthology of Baseball Writings* edited by Dick Wimmer. "There is something magical about baseball. No matter how many times you swear off the game due to players' strikes, the free-agency shuffle, or undisguised greed, the grace and appeal of the game always draws you back." This book, a gift from his son, is a "truly outstanding assortment of baseball pros documenting the game's impact on American culture."

All-Time Favorite: *The Plain English Handbook* by T. C. Cummins. Given to him by his high school English teacher, he has used this book for more than 35 years. "Thousands of times it has answered my questions about grammar, sentence structure, and effective use of the English language. I would not leave home without it."

Jan Reid, novelist, journalist, and editor

1997: *Underworld* by Don DeLillo. The novel begins in 1951 at a Brooklyn Dodgers/New York Giants game with Frank Sinatra, Jackie Gleason, and J. Edgar Hoover sitting together in the stands. Sinatra and Gleason are drunk. On the other side of the globe, the Russians are exploding their first atomic bomb. "The book isn't easy," says Reid, "sort of like an eight-hundred-page collection of short stories. But it's brilliant."

All-Time Favorite: "That's an impossible question. A book you need to read, though, is *A Flag For Sunrise* by Robert Stone. "About America's questionable involvement in a Central American revolution, the novel offers "great characters, setting, and dialog. Stone tells you about important world events before CNN knows they exist."

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film

By Karl Pallmeyer

cinema paradiso

Something old, something new

It all started just over a dozen years ago, when some local movie buffs started a club to see some films they would never have a chance to see unless they did something about it. Five years before *Slacker* made him a household name in independent film circles, writer/director Richard Linklater and Lee Daniel—who became Linklater's cinematographer—convinced Dobie Theater owner Scott Dinger to lend them a screen for a midnight movie program.

"They approached me and they wanted to do a series of short films," Dinger says. "It sounded like a good idea. We try to do different things and try to be a different theater, so it fit in with what we do."

That was the beginning of the Austin Film Society (AFS), and today, it is one of the major players in the Texas film community—known for programs that feature treasures from more than a century of cinema and for the assistance given to budding filmmakers.

That midnight show in 1985 generated enough interest among Austin's highly film-literate population that the club staged a number of films around town at other theaters, night clubs, museums, and makeshift venues that include mostly the Texas Union Theater at UT, the Alamo Drafthouse, and from time to time the Paramount Theater and Laguna Gloria. The peripatetic film group developed a reputation for providing thought-provoking as well as entertaining films. Its membership has grown accordingly and now numbers more than 800. For an annual fee of $20, members get movie discounts and first chance at tickets for their star-studded fund-raising events.

"I'm sure at the time they didn't think it would become such a full-service film society," Dinger says. "It's definitely prospered and grown into something that no one imagined it would be."

More than 100 screenings are scheduled throughout the year, so that during any given week there is a potpourri of film art somewhere in town. The shows are entertaining as well as educational. Programs have featured silent movies that defined the techniques of modern filmmaking or, in some cases, were experiments in what was considered a new artistic medium. AFS also brings to town exotic international films that look at the world in a different way or give insights into a culture other than our own. And they're not just the classic French New Wave films of Francois Truffaut or the Swedish angst of Ingmar Bergman. AFS has pioneered by showing unknown and rarely seen works by Russian, Indian, and Middle Eastern filmmakers.

"These are good films you can't see on the big screen or you haven't been able to see in a long time," says Kris DeForest, director of artists services for the AFS. "A lot of these films aren't available at video stores."

Many programs feature off-beat, forgotten, or overlooked American films that express a unique personal vision, examine the American heritage, or just captivate the audience with a story well told. Although you may have seen them before, these movies are presented with detailed program notes plus a brief explanation by a guest speaker. The group most recently presented a retrospective of works by John Cassavetes, the writer/director/actor considered the father of American independent film. One of the group's biggest attractions is its ongoing series of films about gangsters, guns, and *femme fatales*, playing Thursdays and Saturdays at the Dobie. "We like to challenge people but please them as well, so *film noir* is very popular," DeForest says.

In addition to featuring unusual films, AFS actively promotes filmmaking in the state by giving grants—to the tune of several thousand dollars—to a handful of Texas film and video artists. Linklater's *Slacker* was funded in part by a grant from the Southwest Alternative Media Project, and with this in mind he set up the Texas Filmmakers Production Fund (TFPF) to pick up the slack when the National Endowment for the Arts was scuttled by Congress. The money is raised at various film-related events, such as the December advance screening of Quentin Tarantino's *Jackie Brown*, which featured cinema golden boy Tarantino in person plus a handful of actors from the movie.

"There's a real thriving film community in Austin, and we're happy to support that," DeForest says.

Some $30,000 was given to novice filmmakers in 1996. Last year it grew to $50,000, and this year AFS plans to raise that figure again. Several projects that received grants through the TFPF—such as George Ratliff's *Purgatory County*, for example—have gone on to take honors at South by Southwest and other nationally known film festivals.

"The Filmmakers Production Fund is good news for Texas and for everyone involved with it," says Carol Pirie, assistant director of the

DAVID TIMMONS

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Texas Film Commission. "It has put together more money to make more grants available to quite a few projects, and it's a really diverse group that ends up with those grants. It says a lot to see the kind of national talent they bring in as panelists to review applicants."

In addition to seed money, the AFS provides services to filmmakers, such as information on how to find the facilities, resources, and money needed to make movies.

"They've become a clearinghouse for people who are starting out in filmmaking," Dinger says. "You can't underestimate their help. It's hard to pinpoint, but they do a lot more than people realize. They inspire local filmmakers."

For a schedule of films or more information about the Austin Film Society, call 322-0145.

* * *

The yardstick of success for any film festival these days is how favorably it compares to Sundance, the premier showcase of independent films in the country. The Austin-based South by Southwest Film Festival is one of a few notable imitations.

A recent article in *Entertainment Weekly* by *Texas Monthly* writer Joe Nick Patoski proclaimed "SXSW is reminiscent of early Sundance—and likely to become the next hot festival." Unlike Sundance where people often have to stand in line for hours for admission to the hot films, the crowds at SXSW still are at a manageable level. Your chances of getting into a screening are usually good if you are patient.

Preferential seating goes to the "badge holders," those who've spent $225 to attend the three-day conference—featuring dozens of panel discussions and workshops with scores of the top independent film professionals—held in conjunction with the festival. But a more manageable $45 buys a film pass, which provides access to all of the screenings, once the badge holders have been admitted. If you see just ten films, the pass more than pays for itself. Individual tickets are available for some screenings.

The film festival, now in its fifth year, runs March 13–21 at theaters all over Austin. More than 150 (mostly) independently made documentaries, features, and short films will be shown. Some highlights include the world premiere of *The Newton Boys,* the latest film from Richard Linklater. Also premiering is *Storefront Hitchcock,* from Jonathan Demme, the Oscar-winning director of *Silence of the Lambs.*

style

By Marion Winik

home redux

Tinker belles

My house was driving me nuts. No matter how much I straightened it up, it never looked truly pulled together, certainly not grown-up or, shall we say, chic. It looked like the home of college students, not that of a reasonably successful lady author and her school-age sons.

Maybe it was the furniture: colorful, eclectic, a little worn. Perhaps it was the layout: having torn down an interior wall a few years ago, hoping for a loft look, I'd ended up with some odd spaces I could never figure out how to use. The scuffed wooden floor was part of the problem, as were other artifacts of the local childlife. Yes, there was one lovely red wall, a David Marsh chest, some good art and objets, but somehow the ensemble failed to charm.

I'll just move, I thought. That's the ticket. Of course, no way I'll leave the Bryker Woods school district. And I'll need four bedrooms. Not to mention a study, a big kitchen, and a swimming pool.

I found the perfect house immediately. It was $300,000.

Okay, I thought, forget moving. I'll remodel! I'll add a bedroom! A separate living area for the kids! An extra bath! I called my friend the remodeller. He came by and gave me an estimate. He thought it would cost no more than $30,000.

I started seeking Plan C.

Aside from the unglamorous living area, I had another problem. My boys were sharing a bedroom so small they could do little but sleep in it, while on the other side of the house, a rarely-used guest room had begun to fill with cardboard boxes, rolling carts, and other storage items. By shifting one of the kids into this room, there would be much more space for play and greater hope for neatness. And it would require no money, just a few friends to do the heavy lifting. The mom of one of the boys' playmates, Ellen Ducote, volunteered her husband to help.

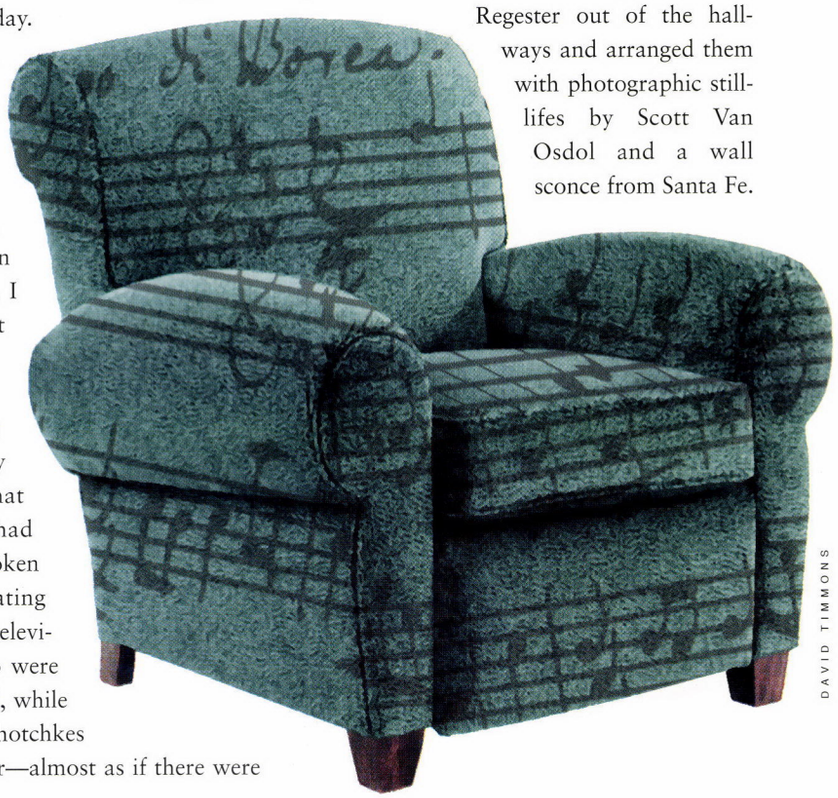
While the menfolk were moving bunk beds that Sunday, I started complaining to Ellen about my other house issues. "Well," she said, "I think I can help you." It turned out Ellen had a business with her friend Sally Cardwell redoing people's houses by re-arranging the stuff already there. They had (pretty cleverly, I thought) called their service Musical Chairs. And though I secretly doubted my living room could play anything but funk, I decided to give them a try.

Sally and Ellen arrived at 10 and suggested I decamp for the day. When I returned that afternoon, my living room was everything I had hoped for: warm-looking, comfortable, even sophisticated. Wow, I said. So familiar, yet so utterly different.

How had they done it? The first challenge, they explained, was that my living room had been effectively broken in two. The seating arrangement, the television, and the stereo were clustered at one end, while tables, toys, and tchotchkes huddled at the other—almost as if there were a slope to the floor and the stuff nobody was sitting on just slid on down.

They had repositioned the furniture to encompass the entire space and added an inexpensive new area rug from Home Depot. The rug not only pulled the recalcitrant end of the room back into the whole, but covered those college-studenty stains on the wooden floor. Its forest hue mediated between the black, pink, and teal couch and the colors of the other furniture. A couple of floor pillows in a matching shade increased overall coziness and added tv-friendly seating. Most of the junk in the corner had been re-allocated to other rooms or tagged for Goodwill.

The re-arrangement of the artwork was even more dramatic. Ellen had felt my three black-and-white photographs of Naomi Nye and her infant son in a deep sleep might be better in the bedroom, while the living room needed something with more energy. Sally moved paintings by Laurie Freelove, Keith Haring, and Tracey Regester out of the hallways and arranged them with photographic still-lifes by Scott Van Osdol and a wall sconce from Santa Fe.



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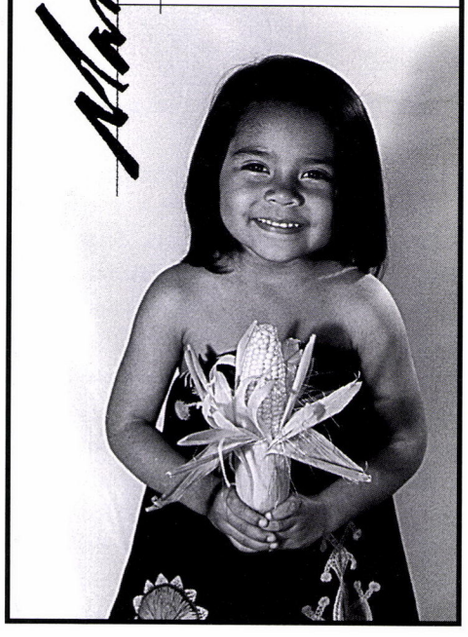

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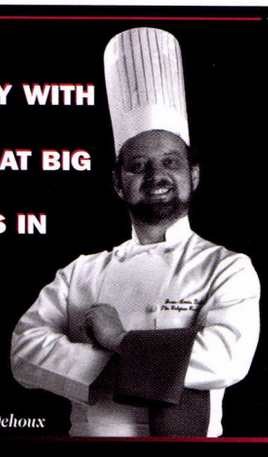

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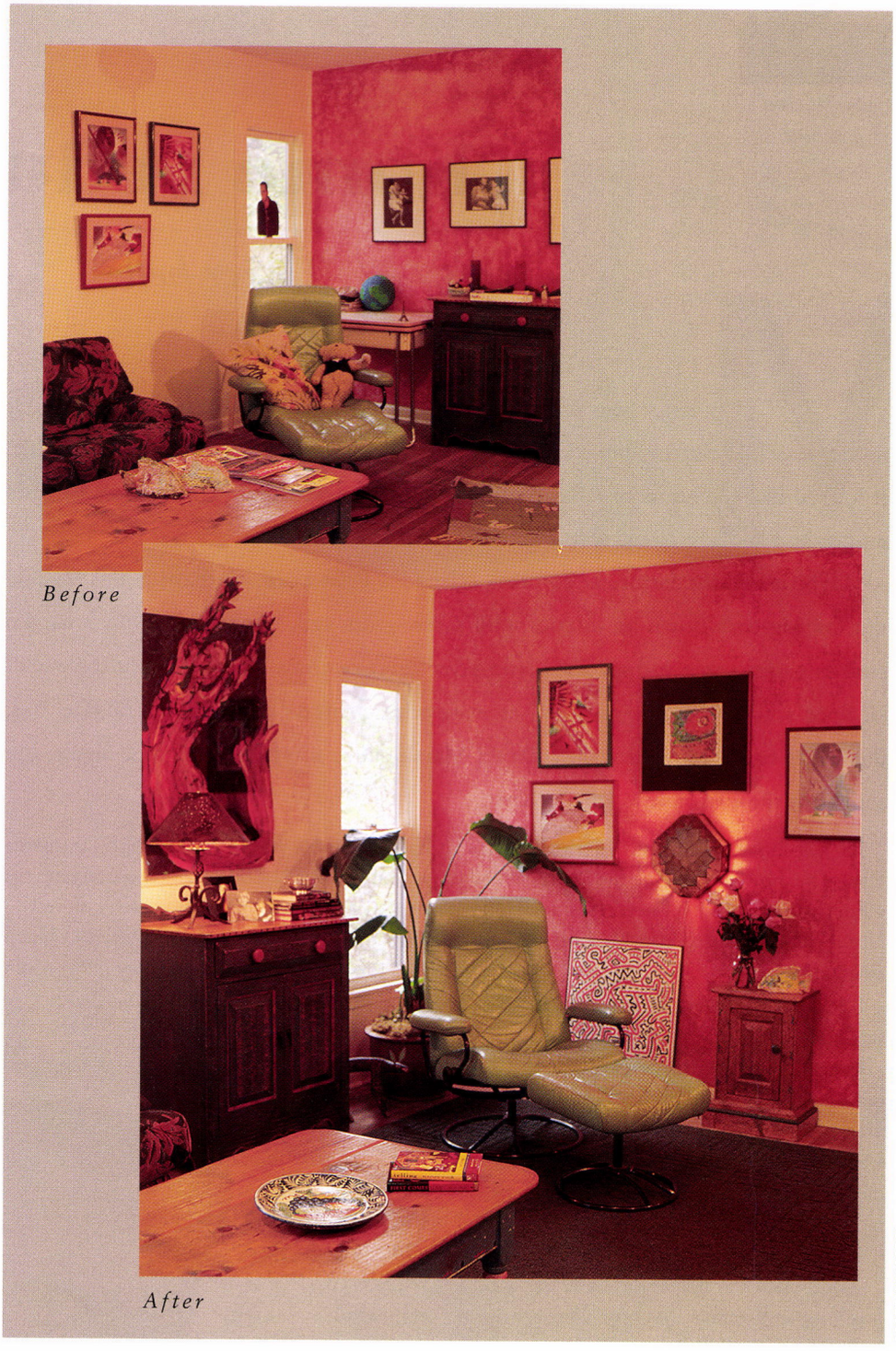

Before

After

SCOTT VAN OSDOL

I was glad I hadn't been here when they did this; I'm sure I would have squawked that they didn't "go together." A Laurie and a Keith in the middle of three Scotts? But now that it was done, I could see it was inspired.

Further forays through my house and closets had turned up perfectly lovely things that weren't being used. Formerly dusty pottery and forgotten hangings were back on show. My other lamp from New Mexico seemed much happier with its geographical brethren than it had alone on a far night-table. And while the children's toys had gone back to the children's rooms, their best artwork, once piled on a countertop, was now proudly displayed. Ceramic fish swam on a chifforobe; self-portraits hung in simple frames. That catch-all countertop, cleared, was arrayed with newly Windexed family photos rescued from my study.

My total bill for this chic injection, including the rug, the pillow,s and globes to cover my many attractive bare light-bulbs, was $450. Suffice it to say, plans for moving and remodelling are on hold.

For information or a consultation, call Musical Chairs' Ellen Ducote at 474-5352.

visual arts

By Madeline Irvine

new directions

Form equals function

Austin has lived on promises of not one, but two new visual art museums in the offing for over 14 years. While we won't see either building open before the year 2000, the long gestation period may finally be proving worth the wait.

In the years since the former Laguna Gloria Art Museum (now the Austin Museum of Art) and the University of Texas' Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery (soon to be the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art) first felt the need for larger buildings, both have grown as institutions, paralleling Austin's growth from a town into a city. But as a museum meant to address the needs of the city, AMOA's growth has been more public and exhibited more growing pains.

It is a friendly race to the finish, with the Huntington ahead of AMOA in the planning process, architect selection, and fundraising—$27.3 out of $30 million has been raised for construction—and a drive is underway for $12 million in endowment funds.

As an added bonus, once the Huntington has consolidated its two cross-campus locations into one grand building, a third museum will begin to make itself felt when the world-renowned collections at UT's Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center get back the exhibition space now occupied by the Huntington's permanent collection. The Ransom Center has already raised $12.5 million to renovate that space.

Until January, AMOA had an architect. But the museum surprised—and delighted—many when it announced that the Robert Venturi plans for a downtown museum, designed in 1984, were being archived for posterity as Venturi's first museum project. Re-envisioning a new museum for the current property at Third and Guadalupe Streets, instead of retrofitting a design suited for a smaller, skinny plot of land that is no longer available, is not cost-effective.

Instead of delaying the project, the move to begin again—made under the directorship of Elizabeth Ferrer, AMOA's seventh leader—makes the potential building more viable, more doable, more real. One could almost hear the collective sigh of relief from art-world watchers, who once would have been delighted to see the Venturi building built on schedule. Starting from scratch means that major changes in museum design, museum function and the museum world can now be accounted for.

And physically, the new lot frees the original design from many restrictions. The land is half a block large, instead of a quarter block, and can contain a more ample, free-standing design, instead of the long, thin building designed to butt up against a skyscraper, which also was never built.

AMOA is completing a planning process that defines the current needs of the new museum based on its mission and its current functions. The architect selection process will follow. As it looks now, the 75,000–85,000 square-foot building will be one-third exhibition spaces, one-third public amenities (courtyards, cafes, shops, reception areas), and one-third administration facilities, prep, and storage.

Some backseat drivers have suggested that AMOA should take the $11.4 million left in the city's bond proposal and build a museum it can actually afford. But Ferrer's response is pragmatic and looks to the city's future. "Austin deserves a great museum, and $11.4 million alone won't meet its needs," she says.

The fresh start will allow a new design to respond to the present and the future. AMOA has not just changed names since Venturi's time, it has changed its mission. Last fall, AMOA announced it has chosen to become a more systematic collecting museum, and, as a result, will need galleries and storage space devoted to the permanent collection. In

(Continued on page 19)

By Madeline Irvine

SPOTLIGHT

MARI CARMEN RAMÍREZ

Architects have one, long shot at making their statement in a museum building, from design phase through construction. Then the conversation is over, the results immutable. Little short of dynamite can change the feel, or emotional tenor, of a building.

In contrast, curators—the folks responsible for planning and organizing exhibitions, and the care and development of the museum's collection—appear footloose and fancy-free, constantly changing the interior life of the museum through exhibitions.

But producing one quality exhibition often takes years of work, and curators routinely juggle several exhibitions at a time until one commands their complete attention as showtime nears. At the best museums and college galleries, new teaching is a priority. "It is a creative position," notes Mari Carmen Ramírez, curator of Latin American art at the Huntington Art Gallery, "in that the curator is also an intellectual."

Ramírez is one such highly specialized professional, and, as a specialist in Latin American art, her international travel schedule makes her seem busier than most. Since moving to Austin in 1989, she has reinstalled the Huntington's collection of contemporary Latin American art. (That collection is recognized as one of the best publicly held collections in the United States.) She has organized or contributed to several exhibitions, some seen in Austin and others farther afield, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. Ramírez's most recent project, "Re-Aligning Vision: Alternative Currents in South American Drawing," was on view at the Huntington early this year, its second stop on an international tour. "Re-Aligning Vision" opened to glowing reviews in New York City last spring and, while passing through town, attracted the attention of art critics from Houston to San Antonio.

Despite many high-profile projects, Ramírez has the calm, quiet demeanor of a careful observer. One would not guess that the 42-year-old Ramírez was the first person in the United States to hold the position of curator of Latin American art nor that she has been instrumental in developing a field that did not exist in 1975 when she began graduate work in art history at the University of Chicago. As a student, Ramírez received support and encouragement from a group of professors who allowed her the time to develop expertise in a field that was just beginning to emerge in this country.

But it wasn't a new field for Ramírez, who hails from Puerto Rico and held two top museum positions there before her appointment at the Huntington. That the Huntington is a college gallery with a research mission is one of its attractions for Ramírez. Here she can conduct research on topics that have not yet received scholarly or critical attention as well as guide a new generation of curators, museum professionals, and art historians.

Ramírez takes great pleasure in the accomplishments of her students. "Re-Aligning Vision" was a joint project—Ramírez shared the honors with co-curator Edith Gibson Wolfe, a doctoral candidate in art history at UT. And recently, one of her protégés was hired at the Phoenix Art Museum. "It is exciting for me to see the results of all these years of work materializing in this way," Ramírez said.

Respect and recognition for breaking new ground with research, exhibitions, and catalogs have kept pace with Ramírez, arriving steadily and with little fanfare. She serves as an advisor or consultant to museums, essay writer and publications editor, and faculty at the Smithsonian Institution's Latino Training Program in Museum Studies as well as Bard College's masters program in training curators of contemporary art. Ramírez was one of six curators from around the world invited to represent a region of the world for the prestigious São Paulo Bienal in 1996.

KEVIN VANDIVIER

And most notable perhaps, the prestigious Norton Foundation in California sent the Huntington a letter notifying the organization that it was chosen to receive a $50,000 grant to be used for the purchase of new art for the Latin American collection. The award, given as recognition of a curator's achievements, cannot be applied for—a letter just arrives in the mail one day. As such, it is one of the most important awards given to contemporary curators.

Selecting the art for that award is one of several projects currently occupying Ramírez. Later this year, "Cantos Paralelos/Parallel Cantos (Experimental Art from Argentina)" will open at the Huntington, and she is one of a team of ten curators working on the next international traveling exhibition Ramírez will bring to Austin. Scheduled to open in 1999 at the Queens Museum in New York City, "Global Conceptualism/ Local Context" will delve into the origins of conceptual art around the world.

But like the travel and research that keep her on the move, Ramírez takes it all in stride and sees it as a privilege. "My work is my life," said Ramírez, offering a typically succinct remark, as if saying more would only get in the way.

This is one of an occasional series on personalities in the visual arts.

contrast, the Venturi building was designed with a steady diet of traveling shows in mind. And over the last decade, many technological advances and architectural innovations have made older designs seem obsolete.

New museums are opening around the world at breakneck speed, from Frank Gehry's 21st-century design for the Guggenheim in Bilbao, Spain, to Richard Meier's vast Getty Museum complex in Los Angeles, complete with an ambitious garden landscape by conceptual artist Robert Irwin. Austin now has a better shot at keeping pace.

Opening last year, these two museums garnered the most attention in print, and they help to define issues beyond a museum's conception of itself or an architect's interpretation of a museum. The hillside Getty complex, reached by monorail from a parking lot, has been greeted by interest and restraint, particularly because it has set itself apart from the city. But that complex reflects a contemplative academic environment.

A sea change in the way museums conduct business has taken place since the 1980s so that outreach and education are more important. Rather than awarding commissions to high-profile architects, museums are now insisting on a greater sensitivity to the function of the museum, the needs of its staff and board, and its interaction with the public. Those needs are being met by a new generation of architects around the world.

These architects are comfortable with the experience of beauty, in the design of the building and the materials they choose, and in the way the galleries hold art. Perhaps the biggest shift in the museum world is yet to come, as education explores the potential for greater interactive experiences, augmenting the more traditional, passive, or solitary art-viewing experiences by tapping into computer workstations and the Internet.

In this century, art museum design has vacillated between big, architectural design statements and architecture that provides art a safe haven. Frank Lloyd Wright's spiral Guggenheim Museum building in New York City or Edward Larrabee Barnes' grand barrel vaults for the Dallas Museum of Art challenge art to stand up to the architecture, while setting up stingy gallery spaces in the wings. In contrast, Houston's Menil Collection, designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano, creates a sense of ease both inside and out that is conducive to viewing art. Piano's sensitivity takes the entire experience into account, from the natural force of the powerful Texas light to the modest, residential, craftsman-style houses that surround the museum.

Few, such as Gehry's Bilbao museum, are notable for bridging what can be the great divide between architectural statement and museum function. Gehry's building has been lauded as an architectural masterpiece in which the interior spaces for the display of art receive as much attention and respect as the innovative skin and structure of the building itself.

Texas has had its share of major museum successes in this century, notably architect Louis Kahn's final building, the light-pierced, barrel vault design for the beautiful, if diminutive, Kimbell Art Museum, and Texas has built enough grand, but flawed, buildings. Beyond Austin's borders, we can look forward to other new museums now on the drawing board, planning for an impressive architectural experience that pays respect to the art it contains. The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth is in the vanguard, with Japanese architect Tadao Ando designing its new building set opposite the Kimbell on Camp Bowie Boulevard, one of the last large spaces available in Fort Worth's Cultural District.

When the new buildings take their place here in Austin, perhaps they will be able to meet the needs of a 21st-century city. How the institutions will mature, however, is an open question, as is how they will add to the quality of life that is at the heart of Austin's vision of itself.

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music

By Steve Brooks

just folks

Voice in the desert

Griff Luneburg remembers the night snow fell on Austin. It was back in February of 1984, and he was trying hard to cancel that night's show at the Cactus Cafe. At the other end of the line, however, the singer was not cooperating.

"I could not tell Nanci Griffith no," Luneburg recalls. "I told my bosses that Nanci wanted to play, and they pulled some strings. We had to use portable lighting. The streets were impassable. People were crashing into trees outside. But we opened, and the place was full. It was a magical evening."

It's been 16 years of magical evenings for Luneburg at the Cactus Cafe, a small room tucked away in a corner of the Texas Union on the University of Texas campus. But the cafe's small size—it maxes out at 150 bodies—belies its reputation. With folk clubs like The Bluebird in Nashville and Passim's in Boston, the Cactus Cafe is known nationwide as a premier listening room, a place for singer-songwriters to get up close and personal with listeners.

The room's history goes back much further—to 1933, when the university opened a soda fountain called The Chuckwagon. It changed its name to The Potpourri in the psychedelic '60s, just before the Cosmic Cowboys started putting Austin music on the national map. It assumed its current name after a 1977 renovation.

The Cactus never found its musical niche until 1982, when Luneburg took it over. A Houston native who came to UT in 1978, he was paying his way through school by tending bar at the Cactus. He was bored by the mixture of Top 40 bands, backgammon tournaments, and Saturday Night Live parties the school was booking into the room. When the programmer quit, Luneburg volunteered for the job.

He was just in time to catch what might be called the second wave of Austin singer-songwriters. Following the Waylon'n'Willie era came a cavalcade of more introspective bards—names like Griffith, Robert Earl Keen, Darden Smith, Lucinda Williams, and Hal Ketchum. An important part of their musical development took place on the tiny Cactus stage. It was a time when you could walk in once a month and see Lyle Lovett playing for 30 people.

"He was somebody who went from playing in here for no cover to marrying Julia Roberts," muses Luneburg.

Looming over all the other names was a craggy, brooding figure who called the club his musical home. Townes Van Zandt had first played the room in 1969, but he didn't become a regular until Luneburg met him in 1984, shooting pool at the Shoal Creek Saloon. From then until his death, on New Year's Day 1997, Van Zandt played the Cactus upwards of 75 times.

Famous for skipping gigs, Van Zandt never missed a date at the Cactus—except for one night in 1986 that Luneburg recalls vividly.

"We were sitting around with the room full," he says. "A half-hour after showtime, we realized Townes was not going to show up. Nobody was leaving, so his guitar player, Mickey White, played awhile. Then Lyle Lovett showed up. He played a couple of Townes songs. I got up and offered people a refund, but only a few people left. We ended up playing *Live at the Old Quarter* (a classic Van Zandt album) on the stereo, and people stayed until the end."

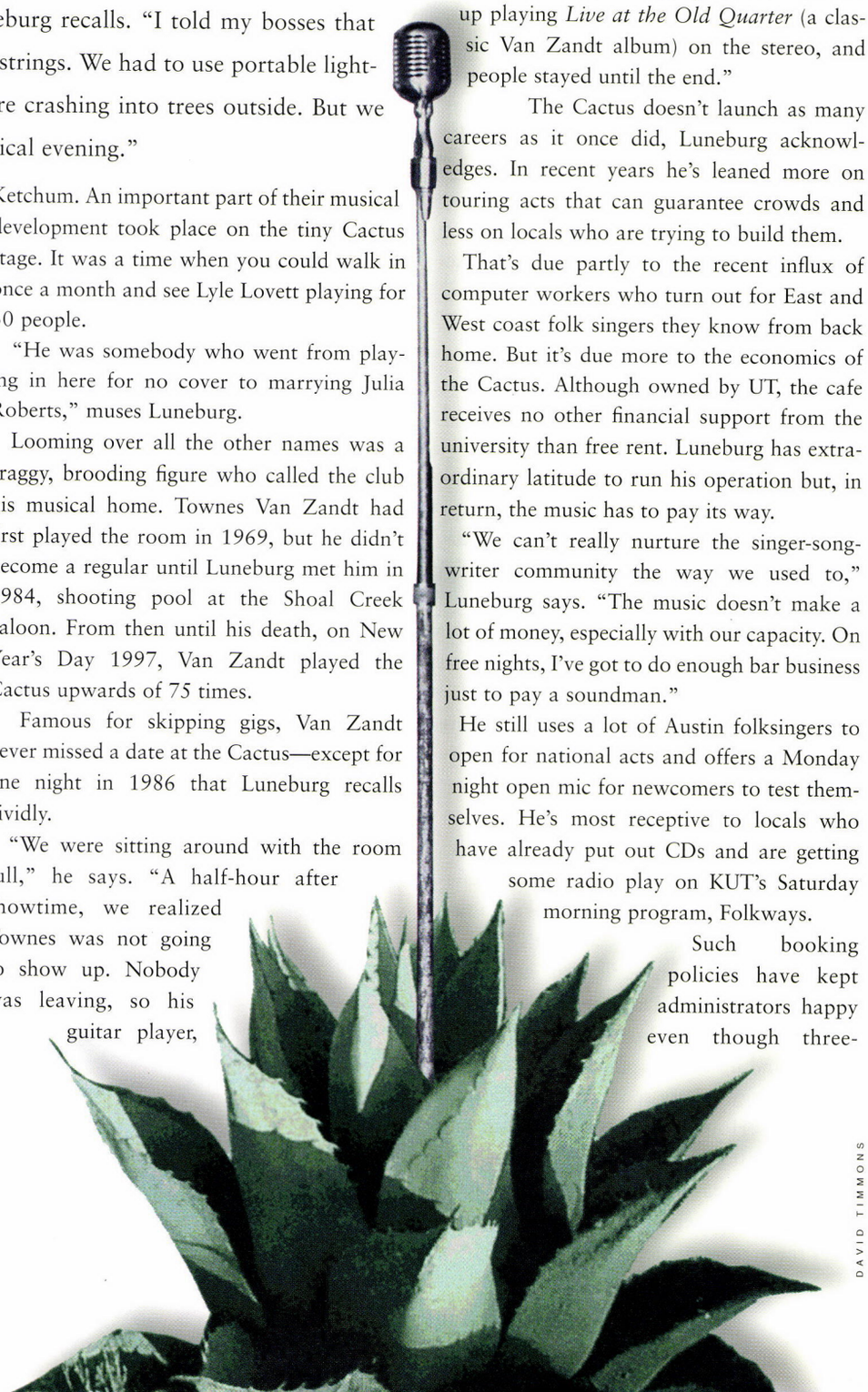
The Cactus doesn't launch as many careers as it once did, Luneburg acknowledges. In recent years he's leaned more on touring acts that can guarantee crowds and less on locals who are trying to build them.

That's due partly to the recent influx of computer workers who turn out for East and West coast folk singers they know from back home. But it's due more to the economics of the Cactus. Although owned by UT, the cafe receives no other financial support from the university than free rent. Luneburg has extraordinary latitude to run his operation but, in return, the music has to pay its way.

"We can't really nurture the singer-songwriter community the way we used to," Luneburg says. "The music doesn't make a lot of money, especially with our capacity. On free nights, I've got to do enough bar business just to pay a soundman."

He still uses a lot of Austin folksingers to open for national acts and offers a Monday night open mic for newcomers to test themselves. He's most receptive to locals who have already put out CDs and are getting some radio play on KUT's Saturday morning program, Folkways.

Such booking policies have kept administrators happy even though three-



DAVID TIMMONS

"IT'S ONE OF THE LAST PLACES THAT'S REALLY GENUINE ON THIS CAMPUS. EVERYTHING ELSE HAS BEEN FRANCHISED. I'D CHAIN MYSELF TO THE BAR IF IT EVER CLOSED."

quarters of the concert crowd are non-students. And the university keeps the Cactus alive in an era when it's auctioned off much of the rest of the Texas Union to private operators.

"It's one of the last places that's really genuine on this campus," says Nika Khanjani, a UT senior who's been working the bar since her freshman year. "Everything else has been franchised. I'd chain myself to the bar if it ever closed."

After 16 years of hearing live music five nights a week, Luneburg himself thinks occasionally about leaving. He's had offers of better-paying jobs from other clubs, but says he'd miss occasions like Butch Hancock's legendary "No 2 Alike" stand, where the balladeer played six straight nights of original tunes without repeating a single song. In the midst of one of the songs, Townes Van Zandt walked in the back door, walked onto the stage, sang a single line, and then walked back out.

"Every time I feel like moving on," says Luneburg, "I come into work, I see a great songwriter, and I realize there's no one looking over my shoulder. I just don't think I could ever find that good a job anywhere else."

The Cactus Cafe is located inside the Texas Union, just off the Drag at 22nd and Guadalupe. It's open Monday through Saturday, from 8 a.m. till after midnight, except when the university is on break. For information on upcoming shows, call 475-6515.

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family

By David Gaines

kind of a drag

My private Guadalupe

Every time another local business changes into an outpost for a national corporation—Barnes & Noble, Tower Records, or Starbucks—I find myself quoting Burt Lancaster in *Atlantic City*, Louis Malle's movie about what prosperity does to a cityscape. Strolling on the Boardwalk, Lancaster nostalgically looks east and says, "The Atlanic Ocean was something then. Yes, you should have seen the Atlantic Ocean in those days." I'm afraid my kids might some day see *Atlantic City* and say to themselves, "Yeah, our dad used to say stuff like 'Yes, you should have seen the Drag in those days.'"

The five or six blocks of Guadalupe where I have spent so much time are my equivalent of Lancaster's Atlantic Ocean, Woody Allen's upper east side, or Melville's whaling ship—other peoples' most significant public spaces. I guess I am a city guy at heart—albeit a forever minor-league-city kind of guy. I love the streets. And some of my happiest moments have been walking with someone I love toward someplace specific on the Drag or drifting with whatever came my way.

Where the Drag is, like many things worth discussing, is a matter of definition. Of course, the Drag is part of Guadalupe Street, a north-south downtown arterial. The east-west boundaries are easy to recognize: The University of Texas is the eastern edge; the west begins and ends with the businesses and vendors across the street from the university—a hybrid of local retailers, national chains, long-time locals, and just passing-throughs.

But the northern and southern boundaries are less exact. My kids, who go to school at Saint Austin's, agree that the southern border is Dobie Mall, the modern tower on the south-east corner of Guadalupe and 21st. Old timers, like myself, might invoke the former G.M. Steakhouse (of "Cheeseburger! Cheeseburger! Pepsi!" fame). People split hairs, but no one puts the Drag south of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, which was once called Magnolia and later 19th Street.

It's when you go north that things get tricky. My unscientific first blush was to put the northern edge at 26th Street—between Jack-in-the-Box and the 7-Eleven, just past The Hole in the Wall and across from the Communication Building. As it turns out, this splits the difference between those who argue for 29th Street ("the Toy Joy, Ken's Donuts, Tamale House corner") like our sixteen year old and one friend who drew the line at "The Gap at 24th Street" ("She sure doesn't know her Drag," responded our eleven year old). My guru on Austin matters, a magazine editor, didn't miss a beat when asked: "The Lone Star beer sign around 27th Street, the metal one near Dirty's."

But my favorite answer was offered by our twelve year old: "Either Taos Cooperative or the tooth." The tooth is the grinning, three-foot plaster molar that has blue eyes and black dimples, the over-the-sidewalk totem of Longhorn Dental Center at 2604 Guadalupe—our local equivalent of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg's eyes in *The Great Gatsby*.

My first recollection of the Drag was on a September day in 1970, walking with my brother Steve up 24th Street toward campus. Like most Texas twenty year olds of my socio-economic stripe, I knew that Austin was a party town, and that's why I was there. All I remember is the bright sunshine, tanned people in cutoffs and T-shirts, Steve's ogling a gorgeous, straight-haired blonde ... and then bumping into the Varsity Theater's fire escape.

Since that day, by my rough calculations, I have walked approximately 3,000 miles on the Drag: from 1975 through 1984, when I was in graduate school and then teaching at UT, I figure forty weeks a year times five days a week times the 1.2-mile round trip and on and on. Trust me, it's a lot. And I have probably driven almost that many miles up and down the Drag, taking my kids to school. Now and then, as I turn the corner to Quack's (formally known as Captain Quackenbush's Intergalactic Dessert Company and Espresso Cafe), walking toward my morning cappuccino, I feel one of my shoes hit a groove

DAVID TIMMONS

I imagine I've worn in the sidewalk. For a brief moment I feel that I have something in common with the dinosaur that left its footprint in the San Gabriel River. It is both comforting and a little chilling.

The Drag has its place in the free-floating home page of shared references. For example, Joe Ely sings "Down on the Drag," a 1979 Butch Hancock song about a struggling musician who lost his sleeping bag and his girlfriend—to Lubbock. Two murals—the Varsity's classic movie moments (Cary Grant in the Prairie Stop scene, Orson Welles giving his speech, and Judy Garland fixing to skip down the yellow brick road are my favorites) and the Renaissance Market's memorable Austin people and places, including Drag legend Bicycle Annie, are there for present-day trivial pursuits and future archaeologists. As is Jack Nicholson's "Heeeere's Johnny!" face from *The Shining* on the side of Sound Exchange, sometimes the first face I see in the morning on my way to coffee.

It hurt a few years ago when I read Andrew Kopkind's take on Austin in *Slacking Toward Bethlehem*: "Richard Linklater, 30, who wrote and directed the movie *Slacker*, lives in Austin, Texas, which is to Slackerdom what the Vatican is to Christendom." As did the *Utne Reader*'s recent snub in its feature on "The 15 Hippest Places to Live." I could take losing out to the Inner Mission in San Francisco, Wicker Park in Chicago, College and Clinton in Toronto but not Hamtramck in Detroit. Then it became clear to me what was going on. The article defined the arc of the "hip hot spots." The semi-painful-but-totally-convincing gist of it was that there are many Drags in North America, and—to paraphrase Paul Simon—they come and they go.

It wasn't always this way. The Drag was something then. Yes, you should have seen the Drag in those days.

So when the company and weather are right, when you are walking in or beside some magical footsteps, it doesn't really matter what the Drag used to look like or what it has become. It is one of the places where I have felt that anything is possible, that—in the words of Saint Catherine of Siena—"All the way to Heaven is Heaven."

On the other hand, you should have seen the Drag this morning.

David Gaines chairs the English Department at Southwestern University and is a basketball dad.

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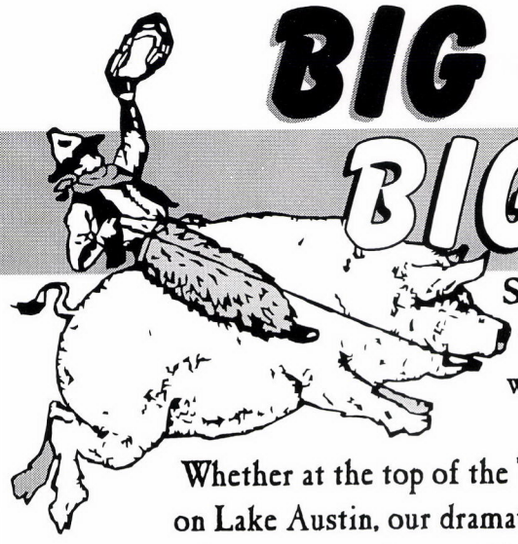
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gardens

By Erin Hynes

expansionist plot

Seeds of construction

I know that bigger isn't better and less is more and small is beautiful and expansionism is evil. I know it, I know it, I know it, but I just can't help myself. When I'm putzing in the yard or mowing the vastness of lawn, a voice in my head starts murmuring something along the lines of "Hmmmm, if I converted this little triangular section of lawn to garden ... (hmmm, hmmm, mutter) and expanded the wildflower garden a few yards ... (mutter, hmmm, mutter) and made a little bed around the four-o'clocks that someone planted before I got here, then this whole part of the yard would seem more unified, look more garden-y, *and* I'd have less vastness to mow."

DAVID TIMMONS

Then, before I know it, I'm pleading with my neighbors Amy and Andreas to bring me all the horse manure they can spare—and they, unaware that their horses are really gardeners' golden geese, willingly spare it all. I spread a layer of the Golden Pooplets about 1 to 2 pooplets deep over the grass that soon will be no more, cover the area with a layer of newspaper a section thick, and cover that with an inch or two of wood chips. (Confession: I call around until I find a tree service willing to dump off their wood chips for free. Then I keep calling until they get around to doing it. I've found that some tree services have smaller chips than others—as we know small is beautiful—and I'm not going to name names, but one of my favorites is also a type of pear. You can also pick up a pick-up-full at Zilker Park.)

For those of you wondering what the blooooody hell the point of the manure-newspaper-wood-chips lasagna is, I'll digress from the subject of this article, which is, as you may recall, the evils of expansionism. Digging up grass to create a new bed is hard, sweaty, hand-blistering work. So instead I smother the grass. The manure layer is optional; I use it to improve the soil. In some regions of the country the newspaper is also optional, but the grasses we commonly grow in Texas are so invasive that a layer of wood chips alone isn't trustworthy. I usually wait a few months for the grass to die off, but if I have a plant I can't wait to get into the ground, I just rake back the wood chips, fold back the newspaper, and dig the hole. Once the plant is firmly terraed, I reverse the process. Eventually the manure and newspaper decay, leaving the chips to act as a moisture-conserving mulch.

Getting back to the evils of expansionism: the problem is that I now have more beds awaiting plants than I can possibly afford plants for this year. I could of course start plants from seed, but perennials take a couple years to get big enough anyway. I've never even tried starting a shrub from seed (oh, wait, yes I did, *Tecoma stans*, also called yellow bells. Lovely.) Thus left in the position of either getting used to a plantless vastness of wood chips or coming up with a solution, I have hit upon an idea: divide and conquer. That is, if I use pathways to divide up these vastnesses into smaller sections, I'll need fewer plants. I'll not only need fewer plants because some ground will be devoted to paths, but because the beholder's eye will perceive each section as being a small unit and will tolerate more blank spaces in it. Trust me on this.

I tried out the idea in the bed that once was the triangular section of lawn, which is attached to what once was a perennial garden until the roofers crushed it with the remains of my old roof while installing my new roof (which is unashamedly green). For the pathways I used slabs of pink granite that I scavenged—yes, I asked first—from a commercial building site. Hauling them home pretty much

wiped out the suspension in the old Volvomatic, but it was worth it. I placed the slabs, which are maybe 24 to 30 inches wide, about 5 to 6 feet apart, the idea being that I can stand on one and reach the center of the section without stepping onto—and thus compressing—the soil.

To test my theory about the beholder's perception, I put a 5-gallon Lindheimer muhly (*Muhlenbergia lindheimeri*) in the center of a section. And that beautiful ornamental grass makes the space look almost full; I'll just stick a few bright annuals at the base of it for color.

I don't have enough granite slabs for the big someday-woodland garden in the side yard, so those paths will just be wood chips, which is fine. Lacking much vision, I decided to take the fairly foolproof approach of starting the planted areas at the base of each tree. I planted a circle of *Eupatorium coelestinum* around each tree; it has purple flowers and grows to be about waist-high. Once those semi-shrubs are established, I'll surround them with a somewhat shorter circle of some other plant—I don't know what yet. And I'll keep going with the circle thing until the area looks unsparse enough for my tastes.

Besides pathways, I've found that *objets de art* are another way to fill vastnesses. Often a more expensive way, but faster. I recently impulse-bought a pink flamingo wind chime at Breed & Co. It's made from metal tubing and is about chest-high. The chimes hang in the center of the bird. To my way of thinking, an art piece that combines a pink flamingo *and* wind chimes is the ultimate.

In another area I've put a teapot, sugar bowl, and mugs that my neighbor, UT fine arts professor Don Herron, made. (Don has a great sale the first Saturday of December at his home studio in the Camelot subdivision off Bee Cave—mark your calendar now.) I intend it to suggest a hastily abandoned Mad Hatter's tea party, twinkle twinkle twinkle. For all I know it may look terrible, but it makes me smile.

By the way, if you are in search of yard-art inspiration, get hold of *Garden Junk* by Mary Randolf Carter (Penguin Putnam, 1997, $29.95). Heck, while you're at BookStop/Book People/Barnes & Noble, get my new book, called *The Weekend Gardener*, which Rodale Press just published.

And on that note of unabashed self-promotion, I'm heading back outside for that tea party.

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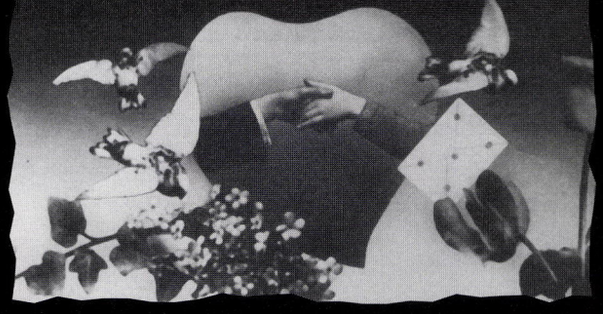

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To a brief but certain mention
Of the quite attractive pension
Awaiting me within the laws."

Says she, "I know what you desire:
An easement run through my entire
Hesitant and cautious mire
Of anecdote and sense."

"But now my thoughts are of your ranking;
I care not for those gone tanking
To the roster's bottom, thanking
Justice for small recompense."

The trap is sprung, before my eyes
A cocoon'd lawyer in the guise
Of loveliness, to my surprise
I find her mask has dropped!

To my car and quickly home
Phones unplugged and all alone,
Visions of our two forms prone;
Alas, I am estopped.

—Jesse Weiss

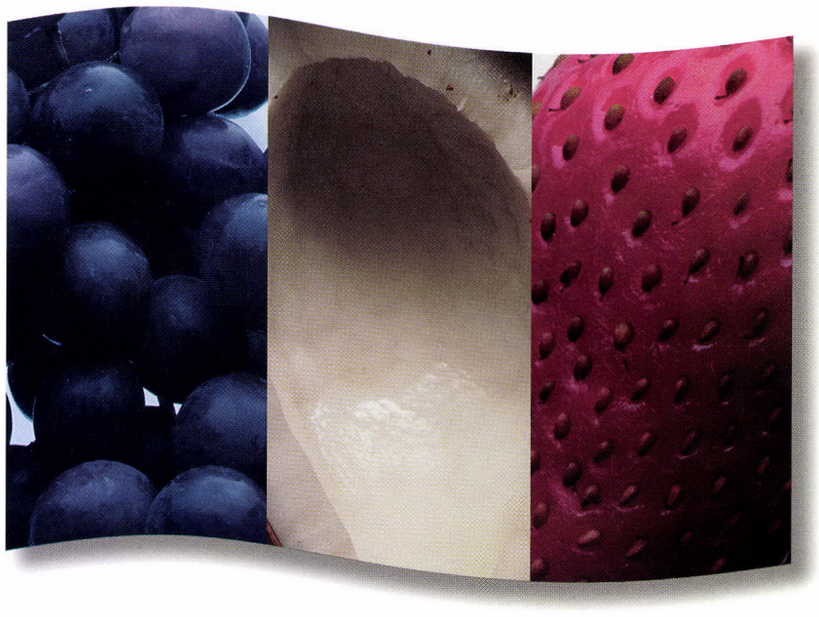
dining

By Diane Payton Gomez
and Diana Welsch

multiple choice

Adventures in dining

It seems as though Austin diners want it all: quality, quantity, and choice—at a good price. Several restaurateurs and chefs are responding to these bargain-hunting *gourmands* with a *prix fixe* (PREE-FEEKS) menu. A staple in European cities for decades, a tradition in larger cities like New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, *prix fixe* is a French phrase meaning "fixed price," referring to a complete meal usually served in three courses for a preset price—often the cost of an average entrée. A pricier restaurant in a larger city may even offer a glass of wine with each course. *Prix fixe* is popular in France, where value is the name of the game, and restaurants offering a good three-course meal for around $20 are filling their tables.



Only a handful of local restaurants offer *prix fixe* on a regular basis—some to fill tables on slow nights, some to draw in diners in search of a good thing, and some for such special occasions as Valentine's Day and holidays. At least two, sometimes three selections are offered in each category (first course, entrée, dessert)—in theory one might be able to enjoy a different menu at the same restaurant each visit. Not to be confused with a *dégustation* (day-gu-STAY-shun), or tasting menu, *prix fixe* menus in Austin have Texas-size portions. So far, these menus, which change weekly or daily, are available only at dinner.

The chef who can turn on a dime and stray from the set menu brings variety to the regular patron and delights the uninitiated. Best of all, he tempts the experimental diner who knows the rules of the road.

Chez Nous

The first course at Chez Nous isn't the food, it's the atmosphere. Walking in the door to this bistro-ish nook reveals a long, narrow, and inviting room painted Van Gogh yellow. Nearly every table is filled on this Wednesday night with an eclectic mix of diners in animated conversation. The energetic staff seems in perpetual motion as if the world revolves around you.

Chez Nous translates roughly to "at our place" where a table is yours for the night, and you can linger as long as you wish. What's different about Chez Nous is the owners' commitment to extravagance (and why not?) in a casual setting (starched table linens notwithstanding). Not *haute cuisine* but not everyday fare either.

Owners are Robert Paprota and husband-and-wife Sybil Reinhart and Pascal Regimbeau. Their original intention was simply to make a living doing what they knew best. The casual, homestyle family food popular in their hometown of Paris has made Chez Nous a perennial Austin favorite. Sixteen years old, Chez Nous is not resting on its laurels. The *prix fixe* menu turned up in 1985, just when the Austin economy was turning down, and nearly half the diners order it on any given night. Long-time chef Eric Pelegrin is in charge of the kitchen. His fresh and expertly prepared creations are heavy on the stocks and *jus* and lighter on the cream and butter. (Pelegrin does make the seductive and caloric duck *confit*.)

The three *prix fixe* entrées are conveniently posted outside, so our appetite is already primed. Each three-course meal is served for $17.50, the price of an average entrée. There is a choice of three appetizers, three entrées, and three desserts, which change daily. The wine list is affordably excellent, but neither wine nor coffee is included with dinner.

The *soup du jour* that evening was a creamy seafood bisque, just right for a cool evening. The brick-colored purée reminded me of the French saying, "Soup's enough, if there's enough soup." The house salad is nothing fancy but the pâté is worth raving about. For an entrée I chose the *magret de canard*, a sautéed breast of duckling, cooked medium rare and thinly sliced. Succulent and sublime, the duck came with a sauce of tiny nonpareil capers, coarsely ground black peppercorns, shallots, and sherry wine in a slight stock with

DAVID TIMMONS

just a touch of cream. Thankfully, the sauce did not drench the duck but merely accented it. That I wanted to lick the plate was proof of its allure.

By ordering the duck I knew I was passing on the *poisson au crabe*, a grilled mahi mahi fillet with crabmeat and a classic French *beurre blanc* with garlic, and the *kote de pork*, perfectly grilled pork, juicy and tender to the fork and meltingly soft to the tooth, with a silky sauce of tomato, garlic, and serrano peppers in a light veal stock. No sauce makes a bolder statement than the exquisitely prepared meat served with it. On the side of each entrée is a melange of glazed snow peas, yellow crookneck squash, and zucchini. My companion is in love with the tiny knish-like potatoes served as the second vegetable side.

The third course offered a choice of rich and smooth crème brûlée, a rich, intensely chocolate mousse, or brie with fruit. The brie was a big pie-slice of a wedge with a fan of crispy red apple slices. The French invented the very concept of restaurants, and this one tantalizes and delights at every turn.

Chez Nous is at 510 Neches (473-2413). Lunch: Tuesday through Friday 11:45am–2pm. Dinner: Tuesday through Sunday 6pm–10:30pm. Closed Monday. Reservations only for five or more. Valet parking at dinner. Prix fixe *menu served every evening for $17.50.*

The Belgian Restaurant

Belgians have a national obsession with food. Eating out is a national pastime, and the pleasures of the table are many. For a country so small, about the size of Maryland, the Belgians have a rich culinary heritage, two of its most notable culinary exports being the fish or chicken stew waterzooi and world-famous beer. The Belgian Restaurant, now in its 15th year at its hidden-from-the-maddening-world Westlake Hills location, defines good dining without being pretentious. In fact, the service is quite friendly and helpful (but never hovering).

Chef and owner Jean-Louis Dehoux and wife Marie-Anne both hail from Belgium—he from Brussels, she from Liege. Jean-Louis has been cooking professionally since the age of 13, first in his father's restaurant and, after saving enough money, in the couple's own restaurant in Honduras. The Belgian Restaurant's other name, *L'estro Armonico*, is Italian for "a higher state of being," taken from the Vivaldi opus of the same name. Family legend has it that the elder Dehoux, pondering a name for the family restaurant in Belgium, reached into a stack of records, drew out Vivaldi, and took the name. What defines Belgian food? According to Jean-Louis, Belgian food is food of French quality with German quantities. Noting the popularity of the *prix fixe* menu in Europe, the Dehouxs decided ten years ago to offer their customers a set-price, three-course meal that changes weekly.

Our first impression is one of understated elegance: the cozy cedar and stone interior, with an upstairs for overflow, is the place for quiet dinner and shared conversation. There are restaurants where the enjoyment of a fine wine is *de rigueur*, and The Belgian Restaurant is one of these. The well-executed and easy-to-use wine list is a testament to the creativity and knowledge of Marie-Anne. If a choice is hard to make—as it was for me—the waitstaff is a welcome resource.

I'm a fanatic for fresh, and when I dine, I

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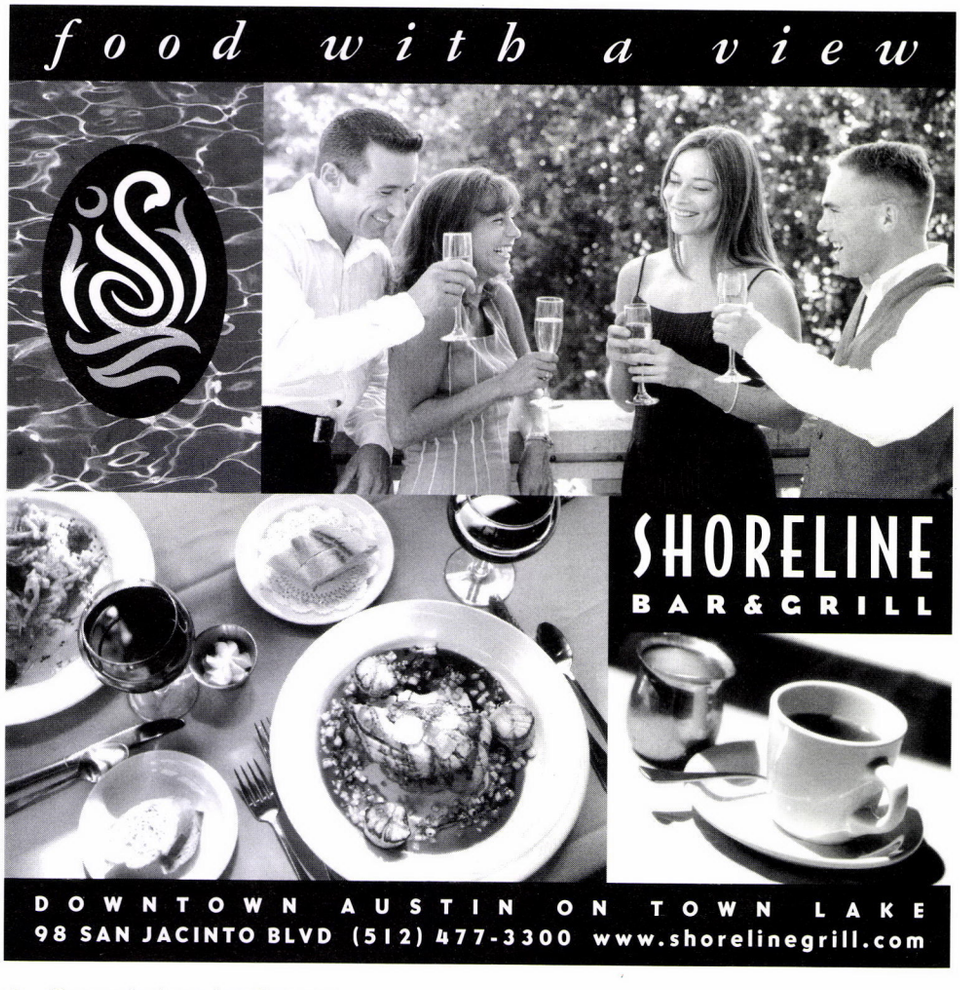
like to imagine things are being made from scratch and cooked to order. This goes double for fine French food, renowned for fresh ingredients, simply prepared, with keen attention to detail. Chef Jean-Louis has rejected flabby precooked baguettes in favor of home-baked rolls, substantial and yeasty. If they had arrived hot, I would have eaten a whole basket of them.

For $22.50 we were afforded many choices. The first course offered a choice between a *soup du jour*, an unusual salad with raw garden vegetables, raisins, nuts, and Swiss cheese in a mustard vinaigrette dressing, or sea scallops *milanaise*. The soup, a reduction of leeks, potatoes, and carrots with a touch of cream, reminded me how rare and good it is to find a soup that tastes of the things it is made of. The thick purée was warming, satisfying, and plentiful.

Two choices were offered for an entrée: a mahi mahi fillet and a veal *roulade* stuffed with Swiss cheese, turkey, bacon, and basil with a shallot, Chimay, and veal stock sauce. The fillet had a tiny dice of cooked apple and onion—a nice touch, very French—and a light curry cream sauce, characterized by its complexity of taste rather than the heat associated with a Madras curry. The fish was fresh and perfectly cooked and a hefty portion (eight ounces?). The vegetable-specked rice timbale was a marvelous touch as were the yellow crookneck squash and zucchini, sliced ultra-thin and sautéed. I wondered what the common *pomme de terre* (Belgium's favorite vegetable) might become in the skillful hands of Chef Jean-Louis.

The *prix fixe* menu includes any selection from the separate dessert menu of twelve delights, but the raspberry sorbet was the *pièce de résistance*: an intense fruity explosion nestled in a thin, crisp, homemade almond tuile and set on a sauce of dark Belgian chocolate sauce. A simple dessert, it is exquisitely prepared and well executed—a lovely contrast in textures. When we can eat nothing more, our after-dinner coffee is served with an unexpected handmade truffle.

The Belgian Restaurant is located at 3520 Bee Caves Road in Westlake (328-0580). Lunch: Monday through Friday 11:30 am–2pm. Dinner: Sunday through Thursday 6–10pm, Friday & Saturday 6–11pm. Sunday brunch 11am–2pm. Prix fixe *is served every evening for $22.50.*



Jean-Luc's French Bistro

Prix fixe has been a fixture on the menu at Jean-Luc's Parisian-style bistro for two years. Lace curtains, pictures on the walls, mirrors, and soft lighting bring a feeling of intimacy to this downtown restaurant and bar. The romantic setting, as lovely as the well-prepared country French dishes, made me feel as if I were going to step out into the streets of Paris.

A nice balance of fresh, quality ingredients and subtle seasonings creates memorable flavors and interesting textures in an otherwise simple menu, which includes family recipes from the Bordeaux region of France where owner Jean-Luc Salles grew up. Mediterranean and North African cuisines influence this menu, too, reflecting the time he spent away as a young man.

Offered Sunday and Monday and on some holidays, the three-course *prix fixe* menu changes weekly and with the seasons. Diners are offered a choice of two appetizers (soup or salad), three entrées, and two desserts. Each is worthy—there was no second best. An extensive wine list features mostly French wines (there was a California zinfandel) with many offerings by the glass, which is extra, as is a robust after-dinner coffee.

The soup that Sunday was a large bowl (rather than small cup) of rich, mixed wild mushrooms made with oyster, white, black trumpet, and portobello mushrooms tinged with sherry. The other selection was the Mesclun, or salad of seasonal mixed field greens, grown locally and organically at Boggy Creek Farms. This evening's salad, which included dandelion, arugula, baby spinach, rola rosa, and baby romaine, was topped with a garlicky vinaigrette and crisp, seasoned homemade croutons.

My entrée, braised lamb shank with penne pasta, was prepared with a veal stock base and red wine, simmered with celery, carrots, shallots, preserved lemon, and herbs, including rose thyme and sage. The mild-flavored lamb, shredded off the bone, was melt-in-the-mouth tender. Another entrée that evening was a classic *coq-au-vin*: boneless chicken (hormone-free) in a Burgundy sauce with apple-smoked bacon, white mushrooms, and baby glazed onions seasoned with thyme and Texas bay leaves. The stewed meat mixture is served over savory potato "mashers," made with Yukon Gold potatoes and crème fraîche instead of milk. Jean-Luc says one of the

(Continued on page 42)

home

By Marie-Claire Quittelier

souper chicken

Something to crow about

Belgian cuisine is considered one of Europe's best-kept secrets, known for its extraordinarily fresh ingredients. A well-known Belgian specialty is waterzooi—a cross between a soup, casserole, and stew—that is served year-round with different seasonal vegetables. It is a convenient one-dish meal with a distinctive cream sauce that adds a tangy, elegant taste. Each household has its own recipe for this traditional dish, which dates back to medieval times. This is just one example.

Originally prepared with fish, waterzooi also is made with chicken that is poached in an aromatic broth made with fresh vegetables. It was traditionally prepared with an older stewing hen, but for convenience you may use chicken pieces. To give the broth more flavor, use chicken with the bone in. The basic vegetables are leeks, celery, carrots, and onions—typical winter vegetables. When serving this dish in spring, add such tender green vegetables as asparagus and peas—either sugar or snowpeas.

Because it can be prepared almost entirely ahead of time, waterzooi is an easy, flavorful meal that is ideal for today's busy schedules. It is served hot in soup plates and accompanied by thick slices of country bread or a crusty baguette. Serve it with a light appetizer or salad of field greens. When entertaining, serve it with a light, crisp white wine, such as a riesling or sauvignon blanc.

Ingredients (Serves 6)

2 tablespoons butter
6 leeks, cut in chunks crosswise
2 celery stalks, cut in chunks crosswise
4 carrots, peeled and sliced into ¼" rounds
2 onions, sliced lengthwise
2 sprigs thyme
4 sprigs parsley
2 bay leaves
2 chicken breasts, skinless, bone in
6 chicken thighs, skinless, bone in
1 quart and 1 cup chicken stock
Salt, pepper

1. Trim excess fat and rinse chicken thoroughly. Pat dry. Season with salt and pepper.

2. Melt the butter in an 8-quart stockpot. Add the vegetables, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Add the chicken pieces. Cover with the chicken broth, and season with salt and pepper. Tie the sprigs of thyme, parsley, and bay leaves together and put this "bouquet garni" in the stockpot. Cover. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer gently for 30–40 minutes. Skim the broth to remove any foam or fat.

3. Remove the chicken from the stock and transfer to a large plate. Discard the bouquet garni. Allow time for the chicken to cool, then debone, and shred the meat into bite-size pieces. Return the chicken to the stockpot, and adjust the seasoning if necessary. (Note: waterzooi may be prepared up to this point and refrigerated. Reheat before starting the sauce.)

Sauce

4 large egg yolks
1 cup heavy cream
¼ cup fresh parsley, finely minced
¼ cup fresh chervil, finely minced

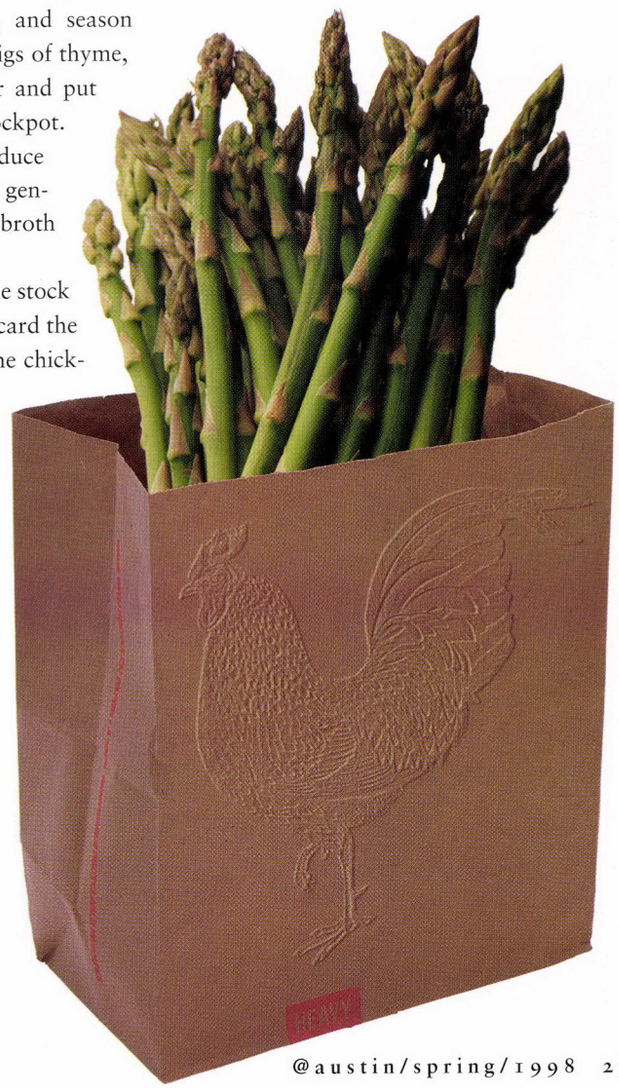
1. Put the egg yolks in a soup tureen or a large shallow dish.

2. Bring the cream to a boil in a heavy-bottom saucepan. Lower the heat and let simmer for about 3 minutes. Pour the hot cream slowly over the egg yolks and stir.

3. Slowly add the lemon juice and stir. You will notice the sauce thickens instantly.

4. Add the chervil and the parsley.

Ladle the waterzooi into the tureen over this sauce and serve immediately in heated bowls or soup plates with an equal amount of meat, broth, and vegetables.



BAT MAN

Merlin Tuttle

Like stage hands building a set long before the actors arrive, the engineers work without expectation, redesigning and reconstructing the deck of the historic Congress Avenue Bridge. By the time the work is done in late 1980, long, narrow crevices have been added underneath.

There's a hint of the mystery of bat navigation in the life of Merlin Tuttle. He's traveled great distances, avoiding hidden obstacles in shadowy landscapes with a sense of direction that most of us can only surmise.

Arguably Austin's most successful environmentalist, he bears little resemblance to the sons and daughters of John Muir, who put Austin on the map—and the front lines—of the environmental movement. In fact, Tuttle will tell you that he spends a good deal of his time trying to distance himself from the methods and attitudes that have characterized much of the movement in recent years. ("I am not kidding you, I have more problems calming down zealots who want to save things than I do actually saving things.")

MERLIN TUTTLE

BY KEN CHAMBERS

PHOTO BY KIRK R. TUCK

MERLIN TUTTLE

As a rule of thumb, never expect simple answers from a man who keeps curare-tipped arrows in a quiver on his living room wall. Tuttle has overcome considerable odds, succeeded with an outrageously unpopular cause, and learned his secrets the hard way. Now he would like to share advice with others who might take on similar odds. Tuttle wants to talk philosophy, strategy, inspiration. He's granted lots of interviews in the past, and he has no interest in doing another "whoop-de-do about the man who gets chased by cannibals."

He has devoted his life to studying bats, saving them, writing about them, and capturing them on film. Yet he steadfastly denies any belief in the sanctity of animal life. ("Who gives a damn if bats have rights?") In an age of impassioned pleas, Tuttle avoids emotion. ("You can't fall in love with animals or the environment or anything else to the point where your emotions blind your common sense.")

A respected researcher with a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas, Tuttle's books, articles, and monologues owe as much to P.T. Barnum as B.F. Skinner. ("I learned that people criticize scientific research only when it isn't entertaining.")

Then there's the matter of Bat Conservation International, known as BCI. Most environmental organizations inspire members with grand sentiments extolling the beauty and majesty of the natural world. Muir's Sierra Club—the granddaddy of environmental organizations—offers a solemn, reverential vision ("To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth...") that has become something of an environmental call to arms.

And BCI? Tuttle readily admits that he didn't have any vision larger than hiring a "$5,000-a-year half-time secretary and writing up some little brochures." Yet BCI has been a stunning success. In what must be considered one of this century's great public relations triumphs, it has started to single-handedly undo the superstitions that have plagued bats for centuries. It has stemmed the decline in bat populations around the world and now supports 14,000 members in 75 countries and more than 25 full-time biologists, researchers, and administrators.

The simple answer—and the answer Tuttle prefers—is tenacity. He wanted to save as many bats as he could, and he was willing to work as hard as he needed to in order to side-step the obstacles in his path. "I can't think back to any time in my career when I wasn't surrounded by plenty of people who

AS A RULE OF THUMB, NEVER EXPECT SIMPLE ANSWERS FROM A MAN WHO KEEPS CURARE-TIPPED ARROWS IN A QUIVER ON HIS LIVING-ROOM WALL.

were smarter and more talented or came from better backgrounds with more money and advantages. But I had a hell of a lot of determination. It's the old tortoise and hare routine; I compensated by working harder than anyone else."

The tiny bats trickle in by the hundreds, then thousands. They swoop low over the river and spiral up into the new crevices beneath the graceful arches of the bridge.

Some 35 years of research and adventure in the remote corners of the world have a momentum all their own. Tuttle is from the old school, and his exploits leap straight from the pages of *National Geographic*. Within minutes we've left his home for the farms of Southeast Asia and the front porch of a Tennessee farm house where Tuttle once stood with a handful of beetle wings. He's a confident, colorful, folksy storyteller, and it's easy to get lost in the journey.

In the next few hours we sit down with an enraged Arizona rancher, build artificial caves with the mining industry, and dissect the analytical capabilities of the frog-eating bats of Panama. (Through field research Tuttle found that they can distinguish between the calls of poisonous and non-poisonous frogs, calls once believed to be out of their range of hearing). Then it's on to the rain forests of Venezuela, where Tuttle studied mammals for three years in the 1960s as co-director of a Smithsonian Institution project. After a short break to swap war stories with a fellow photographer and supervise workers clearing land around his new house, he will regale me with more stories about the different ways big cats pounce and the techniques of tribes that hunt them. Grabbing a mottled iron spear from the wall, he crouches down in front of his sofa to demonstrate the form used by the Masai tribe of Africa to kill a charging lion.

Tuttle's advice is linked inextricably to his experience. He's found answers all over the world—a great many of them in Austin, Texas—and we must travel back with him to retrieve them.

The size, temperature, and humidity suit Tadarida brasiliensis, the Mexican free-tail. By early June, their numbers double; each of the females, who make up the majority of the bridge's residents, gives birth to a pink, hairless pup.

Long before he traversed rain forests or learned to catch a bat on film in the dead of night the instant it drinks from a desert flower, Tuttle learned the discipline needed to gather and record facts. He began at an early age to methodically peer into the secret lives of bats. At age nine he knew that he wanted to become a mammologist. A few years later he began serious field studies when his family moved to Kentucky not far from a bat cave. In high school his work overturned long-standing beliefs about the migratory habits of brown bats.

Tuttle realized early on that bats were essential and fascinating members of the ecosystem and that the myths surrounding them had no basis in fact. This made their wanton slaughter especially painful to him. One evening a few years after finishing graduate school, he took a group of friends to Hambrick Cave in Alabama to show them the 250,000 gray bats that would emerge at dusk. He had studied the bats there for years and referred to them in his doctoral dissertation for the University of Kansas. They never came out. Inside the cave Tuttle found sticks, stones, rifle cartridges, and spent fireworks—the colony had been destroyed.

At some point in this part of his life, two thoughts coalesced. He knew the information he gathered could overturn the superstitions driving bats to extinction. If presented properly, his research might even motivate people to protect them. The second, which he knew instinctively, was that emotion could negate any advantage the facts might give him. These are the thoughts that Tuttle had in mind when he led me from Tennessee to Southeast Asia.

In Tennessee, a

MERLIN TUTTLE

WE GOT A FEW OF THE LEADING CITIZENS INTERESTED, AND THEN WE GAVE OUT EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS TO THE SCHOOLS. WITHIN A YEAR, THE SCHOOLS HAD BAT CLUBS, AND THE KIDS WERE WEARING BAT PINS AND MAKING THEIR OWN BAT T-SHIRTS.

farmer gave him permission to enter his cave but asked him to kill all the bats inside. Instead of lecturing him on the importance of bats, Tuttle thanked him and headed toward the cave, where he found the wings of potato beetles, a notorious agricultural pest. Back on the farm house porch, he held out a palm full of the wings and innocently asked the farmer what insect they had belonged to. "The last time I checked, that man was ardently protecting those bats."

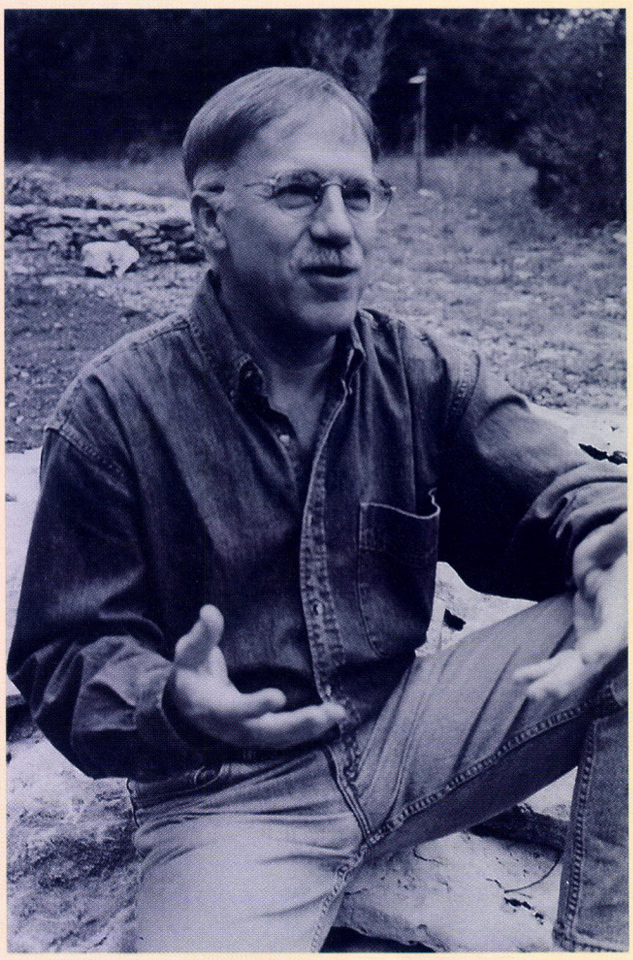
In Southeast Asia, Tuttle found farmers were killing bats to the point of extinction because they had seen them around their crops and noticed when they left, the flowers were destroyed. Tuttle's research showed that the flowers are so perfectly adapted that their petals fall off moments after the bats pollinate them—not because they're damaged by bats.

Even a Kentucky farmer who slaughtered tens of thousands of bats deserved a sympathetic ear. "The public health people showed up at this guy's place and told him that these bats are rabid and probably going to kill his family and cattle if he doesn't get rid of them. He goes out and dumps kerosene down the cave and lights it on fire."

Tuttle learned that the farmer's family had lived on the land for three generations with no incidents of rabies. "I said 'And you let some stupid city slicker come out here and tell you they're all rabid and gonna kill you? Do you know you just lost the best mosquito control you'll ever have? And you've got a garden here. Do you know that insects will flee an area when they hear bat echolocations? Ooh, man, I feel for you. You really took a loss here, you know.' The guy was literally choked up." Before he left the farm, Tuttle and the farmer walked down to the cave to try to find a way to restore the colony.

To Tuttle the lesson is obvious. "Too many of us get bogged down in each other's mistakes. We don't give each other credit for what we might accomplish in the future. When people see that you're actually concerned and that you're not going to crucify them because they've already made a mistake, life gets so much simpler."

By August the pups are flying. Tens of thousands emerge in the evening like thick, curling columns of smoke and fly south along the river. No one knows where the bats go or what they do at night.



KIRK R. TURK

Tuttle has a bone to pick with the big boys. Realizing that research alone wasn't enough to reverse the rapid decline in bats, he called on the world's leading environmental organizations to lend a hand. Instead they showed him the door. Bats had none of the appeal of whales, seals, or panda bears, and the organizations weren't willing to devote even a small percentage of their funds to their preservation. Tuttle realized that the "history of conservation is a glamour contest, and bats weren't glamorous."

So, in 1982, while still a full-time curator of mammals at the Milwaukee Public Museum, he started Bat Conservation International. He called it "an act of desperation." The intent was to educate people about the value and importance of bats, push for their protection, and support bat-related research.

But BCI also earned him the label of "environmentalist," which often guarantees a less-than-friendly reception. Tuttle remembers a chilly encounter with the American Mine Congress, a group he now considers an ally, in Washington, D.C.

"I dealt with bats, which made it three times as bad as just being an environmentalist. You could see it on their faces. They were thinking 'It's a skunk. All we need to know is what triggers it to spray and how far it can hit.'"

In some cases, he believes, the stereotype is understandable. "We've got too many polarizing things going

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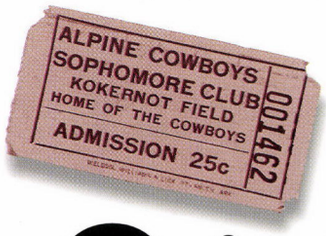
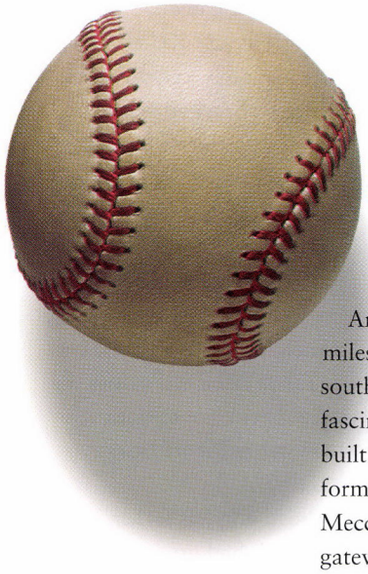


Cowboy Baseball

A Real-Life Field of Dreams

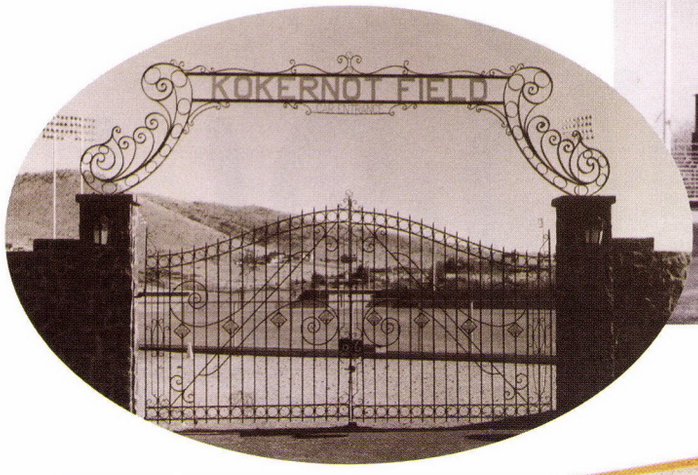


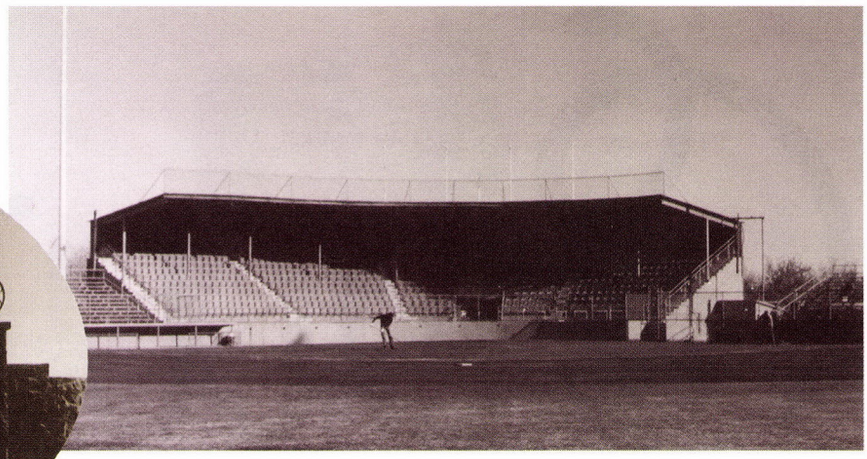
"It was like a myth," said 1950s Longhorn slugger Tommy Snow, winner of last year's University of Texas alumni batting derby. "As a ballplayer, you'd hear rumors about it from time to time. People would talk about this field built by a rich rancher. They said it was completely out of context. Way out on the edge of some far West Texas cowtown. But it wasn't just any ballpark, it was said to be first class. Even better than the majors'. It was magical. A utopia."

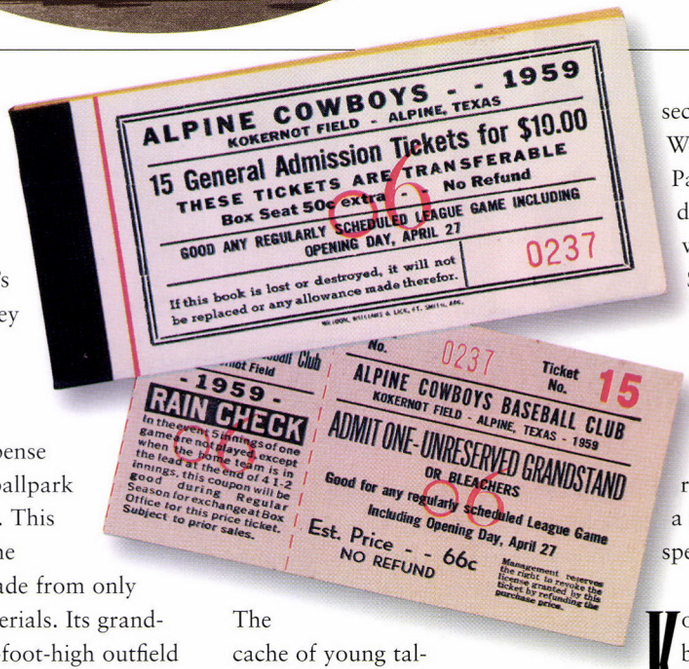
Five decades before the Ballpark at Arlington, 20 years before and 600 miles from the Houston Astrodome, far southwest of the Permian Basin and its fascination with football, a shy cattleman built a real-life field of dreams that transformed a dusty Texas outpost into a Mecca for budding baseball stars and a gateway to the major leagues.

While twice this decade Austin shied away from minor league baseball, 52 years ago one man built what *Sports Illustrated* has called the world's most beautiful ballpark in one of the most improbable places: Brewster County, the largest and emptiest county in Texas. He picked up the tab for a $1.25 million stadium in Alpine—a place where cattle far

By Rob Earp



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GOOD ANY REGULARLY SCHEDULED LEAGUE GAME INCLUDING OPENING DAY, APRIL 27
If this book is lost or destroyed, it will not be replaced or any allowance made therefor.
0237
- 1959 -
RAIN CHECK
In the event 5 innings of one game are not played, except when the home team is in the lead at the end of 4 1-2 innings, this coupon will be good during Regular Season for exchange at Box Office for this price ticket. Subject to prior sales.
No. 0237
Ticket No. 15
ALPINE COWBOYS BASEBALL CLUB
KOKERNOT FIELD - ALPINE, TEXAS - 1959
ADMIT ONE-UNRESERVED GRANDSTAND OR BLEACHERS
Good for any regularly scheduled League Game including Opening Day, April 27
Est. Price - - 66c
NO REFUND
Management reserves the right to revoke the license granted by this ticket by refunding the purchase price.

outnumbered people—that cost $1 million more than Chicago's famous Wrigley Field.

Herbert Kokernot Jr. spared no expense building the ballpark of his dreams. This diamond in the desert was made from only the finest materials. Its grandstand and 10-foot-high outfield wall were built with rich, red granite stone. Boxcars full of red clay were brought in from Georgia for an infield that was smooth and seamless. Everything from the gates to the lanterns to the ticket windows was decorated with a wrought-iron baseball motif so detailed, you could count the stitches on the balls. The field sported true major-league dimensions and native grass that stayed green all year. It stood out in stark relief to the pale, dry landscape.

The stadium drew athletes from throughout the state—from the University of Texas, A&M, and other colleges—and across the country. Bush leaguers and Hall of Famers alike flocked to the Big Bend to play baseball and learn skills to succeed in life. The cache of young talent—some of the finest ballplayers of the 1940s, '50s and '60s—was regarded as a cradle for the major leagues. In all, over two dozen big leaguers got their start at Kokernot Field, including a manager, a general manager, an American League Rookie of the Year, and a Hall of Famer.

Kokernot Field also drew the big-league ballclubs. Such major-league teams as the St. Louis Browns, Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox, and the Pittsburgh Pirates stopped in to play exhibition games on their way to spring training in Arizona and California. With talent like this, the ballpark drew huge crowds of spectators, and not just local sports fans—attendance regularly outnumbered the population of the entire town. Leaving a secluded ranch life, West Texans from El Paso to San Antonio drove for hours to watch the likes of Satchel Paige or Gaylord Perry and experience first-hand America's favorite pastime: baseball. People realized they were in a special place at a special time.

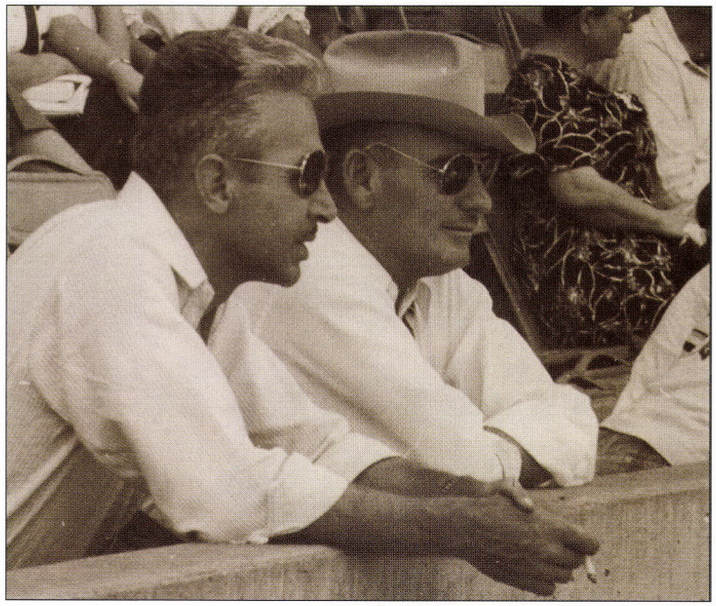
Kokernot Field was built when baseball was in its prime. Back then there were more ballplayers and more ballclubs in America than ever before or since. Every town with a stop sign and a clapboard shack had its own local nine. Bigger towns could support minor league teams, but smaller, poorer towns couldn't afford professional baseball. Instead, they went with semi-professional teams made up of everyday folks that were usually bankrolled by local industry. There was the occasional ringer, of course, but by and large the semi-pros gave ordinary people with the gift of baseball the chance to play and make extra money on summer weekends.

More importantly, the semi-pros brought baseball to the millions of people living outside major metropolitan areas. Decades before ESPN, when most of the country was still living in small towns, these teams were a vital, personal connection to rural America that made baseball more than just a game.

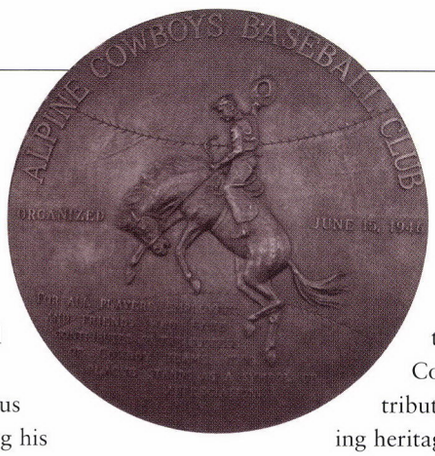
For Herbert Kokernot Jr., affectionately known as Mr. Herbert, baseball was a grand departure from the grind of managing his family's many enterprises, which included, most notably, the famed 06 Ranch. About one-third the size of the King Ranch, the 320,000-acre cattle ranch stretched across the stony backbone of both Brewster and Fort Davis counties.

Created by his father, the 06 Ranch had grown from a small family stake into a nationally renowned cattle operation. The family business included other successful ventures—banks, hotels, a rail line, and the Pearl and Lone Star breweries. Without the drive, desire, or talent to expand his family's holdings, Mr. Herbert simply enjoyed what was there. "He never added an acre to the 06," said ranch foreman Ted Gray,

"No matter where you were, you'd hear the game going on. You'd hear the bat and the ball. You'd hear the cheers or moans of the crowd. If you didn't go to the game, the game came to you."



Mr. Kokernot (in Stetson) enjoying a game.



"but he never lost one either." By middle age, Mr. Herbert had lived an inconspicuous life following his father's lead.

But behind his quiet facade were big dreams. A third baseman in college with an impressive .300 batting average, he always loved the game of baseball. He had confided to a few close friends that he wanted to own a semi-professional baseball team and a classy stadium to go with it. His chance came in 1946 when a scrappy group of local boys captured his attention and imagination.

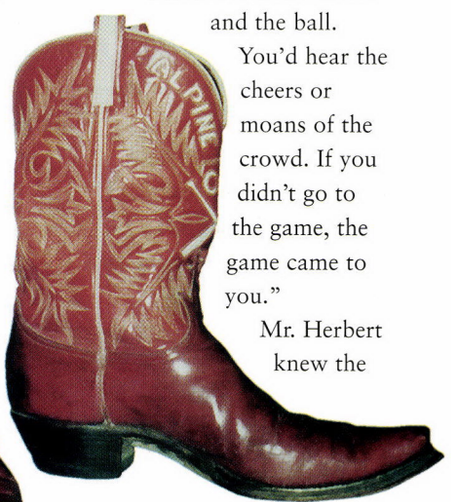
He found them playing baseball along the southern edge of the 06 Ranch. Called the Alpine Cats, these boys had made a home field out of a barren dirt patch, a backstop from a lopsided semicircle of scrap posts and chicken wire. They had sent challenges out to all the area teams, and they took on all comers. More often than not, they won.

Mr. Herbert took over the team. But the Cats, with their shabby uniforms and worn equipment, were too homespun for his taste, so he reinvented them. He changed their name from the Cats to the Cowboys—a tribute to his ranching heritage. He paid for equipment and uniforms on par with the major leagues. He promised them a spectacular new stadium to rival the best in the country. And then he built it.

Kokernot Field was better than anything anyone ever imagined. A rose garden graced the entrance. Inside were concession stands trimmed with Spanish tile and decorated with gleaming silver bas-reliefs of baseball bats intertwined with the 06 brand. The fences were painted with Mr. Herbert's 06 in letters four feet high. Tickets were embossed with people's names. When fans found their seats, they looked across the splendid grass to a pristine, blue outfield wall with no advertising. "Kokernot Field was the showplace of semi-pro ball," said legendary Longhorn baseball manager Cliff Gustafson.

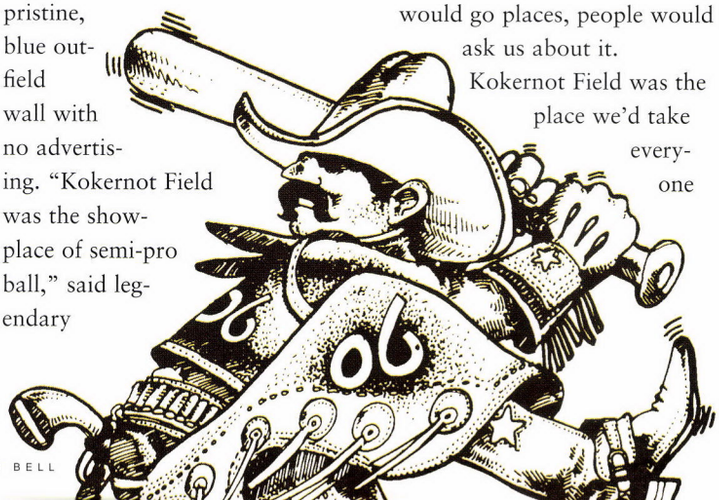
It was as grand and beautiful as any major-league stadium at the time, providing much-needed relief from the hard times of a West Texas town living in the shadow of the Depression and a long world war. Kokernot Field offered a new and almost entirely foreign gift: the game of baseball.

"Everyone in the town felt the ballpark was his," said Gene Hendryx, longtime KVLF radio man and voice of Alpine. "We knew we had something special. Everyone knew it. When we would go places, people would ask us about it. Kokernot Field was the place we'd take everyone who'd come to visit."



"Baseball was literally in the air," remembered Austinite Lolly Lockhart, who grew up in Alpine during the 1940s and '50s. "Our little town was nestled within the Davis Mountains, so sound really traveled. No matter where you were, you'd hear the game going on. You'd hear the bat and the ball. You'd hear the cheers or moans of the crowd. If you didn't go to the game, the game came to you."

Mr. Herbert knew the best way to keep fans in the seats was to beat teams like the Sinton Oilers—arguably the best ball-club in semi-pro history. "The local team was good for a local team," said now federal judge Fred Davis, the Cowboys' batboy in the early 1950s. But Mr. Herbert had his sights on the national championship, so he recruited players out of the NCAA's Southwest Conference, including Longhorns such as Boston Red Sox signee Tommy Snow, All-SWC catcher Dan



BOB BELL

Above: the 1953 Alpine Cowboys. UT star Tommy Snow is on the back row, fourth from the left.

Right: federal Judge Fred Davis was a batboy for the Cowboys in the 1950s.

Watson, and unpredictable fireballer Boyd Linker.

"Mr. Herbert only took the very best athletes," said Gustafson. "There were a lot of ballplayers jealous of the guys invited to play for the Cowboys."

And Mr. Herbert took care of his boys. He was known for his generous bonuses—$100 per home run, $25 per strike out—as well as his post-game bashes where the local heroes would chow down on barbecue and dance the night away, kicking up their custom-made, 06-emblazoned Tony Lama team boots. College athletes across the country vied for the chance to come to Alpine for the summer, play for the Cowboys, and earn extra money working as cattlemen on the ranch.

Baseball meant much more to him than just big money and high times. "Most great semi-pro teams won by getting former major leaguers who still had some bang left in them," said Tom Chandler, the Cowboys manager, who, in 1959 went on to coach baseball at Texas A&M for an historic 26 years. "But Mr. Herbert didn't want anything to do with ex-professionals." Instead he concentrated on young men just starting out, gave them scholarships, paid them well, and gave them the best baseball facility money could buy. He gave them a shot at the majors or whatever else life had to offer. "Mr. Herbert wanted to develop winners both on and off the field," said Chandler.

The Cowboys dominated Texas semi-pro baseball for 13 years, winning an unprecedented nine regional championships. It was no wonder. On the roster were greats like Norm Cash, Detroit Tiger first baseman and 1961 American League Rookie of the Year. So were former Angels manager Jim Fregosi and former Giants general manager Bobby Quinn. Fresh out of high school, pitching great Gaylord Perry got a rocky start in Alpine on his way to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

The Cowboys were so good the military would ship ringers from base to base, team to team, just trying to beat them. During the Korean War, the army assigned two future World Series pitchers, Don Newcombe and Bob Turley, to play baseball, treating Alpine to some of the best pitching the New York Yankees and the Brooklyn Dodgers had to offer. Year by year with such ringers as Brooklyn Dodgers pitcher Johnny Podres, the Cowboys advanced to the highest ranks of the national tournament. In 1958, the last *real* year of semi-pro ball, the Alpine Cowboys made it to the finals but lost by one point in the ninth inning.

After the 1958 season, semi-pro teams collapsed across the country. Television brought major-league baseball into people's homes, and fewer fans came out to support their local teams. The Korean War had ended, and military teams, which fueled the semi-pro competitions, were disbanded. The Sinton Oilers—the Cowboys' main rival—disappeared when sponsor Plymouth Oil Company went bankrupt. There was no one left to play.

To keep the team going, Mr. Herbert signed on with the pros, converting the Cowboys into a Class D farm club—something like the minor leagues of today—under out-of-state managers with the Boston Red Sox. The move made Alpine the smallest town in baseball history to field a professional-level team.

Despite his rapport with the major leagues, despite his many contacts, nothing prepared Mr. Herbert for professional baseball. He was accustomed to doing things his way, but he was no longer in charge. Players were traded so quickly that the townspeople never had a chance to get to know them. Baseball was no longer a sport, it was a business.

"The public didn't have the closeness with the minor-league players they had had with the Cowboys," said Hendryx. "Alpine really didn't feel the Cowboys were theirs anymore."

When the farm league and the Cowboys folded in 1961, just about everyone was glad to see them go. Mr. Herbert turned his full attention and vast financial resources to the local college baseball program, giving Sul Ross State University at least 19 full baseball scholarships a year, top-notch uniforms, and an open pocketbook. The Sul Ross Lobos quickly became a conference powerhouse, traveling to three College World Series and winning one national championship. So emotionally invested was he in the Lobos that, when Sul Ross president Norman McNeil delayed filling a head coaching position, Mr. Herbert violated all protocol and hired someone himself. With no authority to make the decision, he started a feud that many people believed led McNeil to scrap the university's baseball program.

Perhaps that's what caused the fateful rift between the two men.

Maybe it was a weak economy

(Continued on page 44)

Bronco Bob's Last Ride

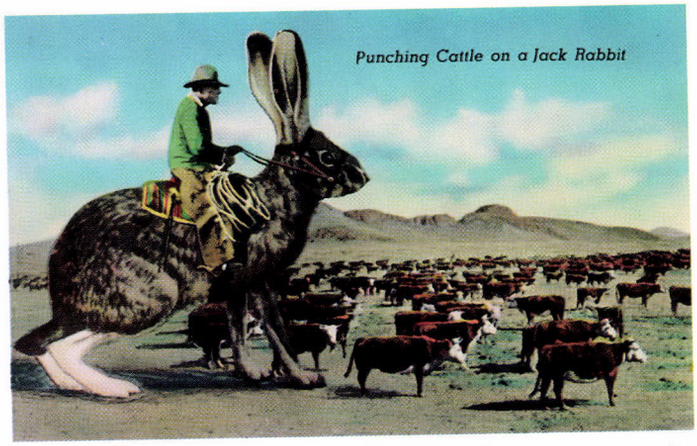
At some point during my fourteenth year, I decided I wanted a life on the range; riding a horse, chasing dogies, strumming lonesome cowboy songs on my old guitar. I swooned over cowboy trappings and began to exhibit a passion for almost any form of livestock. If a cow wasn't available, a goat or a even a chicken would do. I did try to reject sheep, having seen enough movies to know that sheep, and sheep men, were a pox on the land, but since they lived in the country, on sheep *ranches*, well....

Because I was a city boy and had no contact with the real thing, motif was important. You could buy postcards at the dime store depicting ranch life, and I covered my bedroom walls with these. For my birthday, I asked for spurs. I found an ivy planter in the shape of a Hereford bull and put it in a high-enough place so you couldn't see the hole in the top. I bought western paperbacks to go on the bookshelf—between a pair of wagon-wheel bookends—and collected ceramic horses. I stapled a Mexican souvenir blanket on the wall, at an angle (I'd seen this in a restaurant), and when relatives learned I was "in a cowboy stage," more decorator accessories trickled in: a pot-metal longhorn belt rack, a real horseshoe (which I hung over my door), and a cheap bull whip I could take in the back yard and crack. I say cheap, because after a few cracks, it began to fray and sling pieces of itself onto the neighbor's roof.

Of course half the fun of anything is looking the part, so I started accumulating "western wear." I'd already talked mom into letting me get boots instead of school shoes, and I had one of the standard cowboy shirts of the day: green and beige plaid with yellow

Short Story by Bob Brown

I didn't know who actually owned the Rocking B, but it was run by a truly hateful old bastard. He hated the customers, he hated the horses, he loathed everything about the place. Of course, we worshipped him.



mother-of-pearl snaps. I wore a wide tooled belt with one of those hubcap-sized buckles on it, but I still needed a hat and an item which really set a true man of the west apart—western slacks. Anybody could, and did, wear jeans, but western slacks, I knew, meant you were serious. Along with the spurs, I added western slacks to my birthday list.

Much to my parents' chagrin (much to a lot of people's chagrin) country music became mine. It was the kind of music that jangled from pickup trucks and highway cafes, and just about all car repair shops. It went with Marlboros and manual labor. And, since this was the dawning of the '60s, country radio stations still played what was called "hillbilly" or "honky tonk" music—country/*western*. Hank Thompson and Hank Snow, Earnest Tubb, Patsy Cline, Webb Pierce, Kitty Wells. Hank Williams remained such a staple I hadn't known he'd been dead for ten years. Oh, yeah, Slim Whitman. Yodeling.

You know, I loved that name, Slim. I wished to be called Slim. Or Buck or Webb or Hank or Jake, anything more cowboyish than Bob. I always liked Matt, but then so did TV. There was such a glut of them, I remember asking a friend if all marshals were required to call themselves Matt.

I took guitar lessons and learned to play "San Antonio Rose." I bought, secretly, a sack of Bull Durham. Maybe it's still sold somewhere. It was cheap cigarette tobacco in a little pocket-sized cloth bag, secured with a yellow drawstring, and it came with papers. A true cowboy could slip out a paper, load it with tobacco, roll, lick, and light a Bull Durham on horseback. With one hand! At a trot, if necessary. I practiced on my bicycle.

The backyard gate, by the garbage cans, was a sagging, dragging thing with a western-like (I thought) beam across the top. For this, I designed a rustic, zigzag-bordered placard from a piece of orange crate and branded it with the words, *Circle B Ranch*. I'd tried to make a branding iron from a coat hanger, but the results weren't satisfactory. The coat hanger was too flexible or the board too rigid, so I wound up doing the job with a wood-burning tool left over from a previous "craftsperson" stage. Reluctant to give up on the idea of coat-hanger branding irons entirely, I kept at it, making little improvements along the way. I thought about practicing on the cat, but he must've read my mind; I was never able to rope him.

Neighbors noticed that I had begun building campfires in the back yard. I enclosed my fires in the obligatory ring of stones and equipped them with a couple of forked branches for suspending a pot of some kind. I could sit there for hours, daydreaming and motionless—except to give one of my coat-hanger branding irons an occasional turn in the coals.

It was during one of these solitary flights that mother stuck her head out the back door and asked me what I wanted to do for my birthday. (I was wearing my new hat. The weekend before, I'd gone to a western shop and blown several month's allowance on it.) "Come again, sister?" said I, nonchalantly. Nonchalance was a required cowboy attitude. Mother stood in the door, hands on her hips.

"You heard me," she said. "And don't call me sister."

What I wanted, I realized suddenly, was to go horseback riding. When I told her as much, mother cautioned me against the idea, but since she cautioned against all my ideas, I wasn't easily deterred.

On the designated Saturday morning, pals John and Eddy showed up at my place. Eddy was the nearest thing to a real cowboy, in that his folks lived in the country and ran a few Hereford cows as a sideline. John, another city kid but as much a cowboy aficionado as myself, always wore boots. For the activities, he'd added a western shirt. Eddy was in T-shirt and sneakers.

"Aren't you chilly in that thing?" my mother asked him. Eddy's arms were purple with goose bumps.

"No, ma'am. It ain't cold," he said, shivering.

"I've got a sweater you can borrow," said mother, completely serious.

John and I squawked with laughter. (I could've said "howled with laughter" except that, at our age, "squawk" was closer to the actual sound.)

My birthday had fallen on the previous Thursday and, sure enough, when I opened my gifts, I got a spur from my sister. One spur. And from mom, western slacks. They were a size too large ("room to grow") and green, to go with my green and beige shirt. I would've chosen a different shade, but mom never bought any article of clothing unless it matched something I already had. I've wondered since what would have happened if I'd started out in life with only one color. Adhering to my mother's practice of natural selection, how many years would it take for, say, green to become something else? Ten? A hundred?

I was the only one of our group in *ensemble*: pristine, wide-brimmed, western hat; green and beige plaid shirt with yellow snaps; matching green slacks (the surplus waist crimped painfully beneath my sturdy, western belt); cowboy boots. I didn't wear the spur.

Before we left, I gave my hat a final adjustment before the mirror and climbed into the car, nonchalantly. John and Eddy admired my outfit and may even have been secretly envious. They wouldn't be today. They would probably feel sorry for me.

We were, as most kids are at that age,

rather oddly proportioned. Almost nobody, except the rare creature who reaches prime in high school, grows harmoniously. Ostrich legs sprout from chickens. Feet or even noses suddenly double in size. Eddy was pudgy and had a big head. John was the most normal looking, but wasn't used to his new dimensions and tended to trip over nothing at all and fall down. Myself, I preferred to think of in western terms, like rangy or lanky. But I was more of a wisp. A reed. A pale, slumpy reed with pimples. And, being nearsighted, I wore glasses. Gross, two-toned plastic things, black on top, flesh-tinted and transparent on bottom. Things no Matt or Webb would be caught dead in. But it was MY DAY and, fortunately, I had no idea I was such a geek. Mom drove us to the Rocking B in the family Falcon.

There is a chic, *environmentally sensitive* mall there today, on an upscale suburban street. But somewhere beneath the Xeriscapes and Range Rovers remain the artifacts of an earlier, simpler commerce. I remember "cedar-chopper" shacks, a place selling goats and Guinea hens, and, wedged between two fields of car entrails, the "Rocking B Riding Ranch and Stables." A "B" riding on a "rocker" was branded in the rustic, zigzag-bordered sign. I'd never actually visited the Rocking B, only admired the sign whenever we drove past in the car.

I didn't know who actually owned the Rocking B, but it was run by a truly hateful old bastard. He hated the customers, he hated the horses, he loathed everything about the place. Of course, we worshipped him. Because, to our unpracticed eyes, he was the real McCoy. He chewed, spit, dipped, cussed, and smoked Bull Durham. His legs were bowed and he walked with a swaggering limp—had he been thrown from a bronc?

The stables themselves were rickety, unpainted sheds which leaned against one another like old drunks, the kind of structures that removing one rotten board would've caused a disastrous chain reaction. The bridle path started at the back of the sheds and wound through typical Hill Country scrub: live oak, cedar, lots of rocks, and cactus. Nothing remarkable but, of course, we loved it all.

We had to wait a while because a bunch of girls were there ahead of us. One in particular couldn't take her eyes off me: a hefty, scowling, gum-chewing giant in pedal-pushers. "Why do they let people like that in here," I muttered. At a respectful distance, John, Eddy, and I watched helplessly as, one after another, the "good" horses we'd picked for ourselves got loaded with shrieking, hysterical girls.

"Long as I don't get one of them danged English saddles," Eddy said, spitting. We all agreed that would be something awful. Besides, I hadn't gone to all the trouble to look authentic just to wind up on the wrong saddle. They were little more than flimsy leather pancakes. You didn't straddle them like a cowboy, you perched on them like a monkey. They had nothing to do with the West.

When the mob of girls had finally been loaded and sent inching around the sheds toward the bridle path, there remained exactly four horses, three with English saddles. The old cowboy had started towards his chair, tilted against an oak tree next to his spit can, when he saw us, evidently for the first time.

"Well, hell, come on then," he snarled, impatiently.

He took me first and led me to an English saddle. "What about that one," I cried, motioning to the last horse with a real saddle. The old man made a derisive, ugly noise.

"He'd kick you over that roof, kid. That's my horse."

We all got English saddles.

Now, any story about dudes and horses must, by tradition, center around one of the dudes falling off. To save time, I'll tell you up front it was me.

John's horse plodded lethargically toward the bridle path and Eddy's followed its tail. This happens. "Following the leader" is a classic rent-horse behavior. Others are attempting to scrape the rider off on the nearest low-hanging branch; ignoring all steering and braking maneuvers the dude has seen work just fine on TV; ignoring the "go" command. There are more, such as galloping at breakneck speed back to the stables (the terrified dude clinging desperately to whatever he can grab onto), but that's a return-trip behavior I would not have a chance to experience.

My horse, a spindly, three-quarter-sized creature with strange, thick fur, lulled me into thinking he, too, would play follow the leader until we reached the entrance of the bridle path where he ignored all steering maneuvers and went to stand atop a heap of stones grown over with prickly pear. Here, he ignored the "go" command. If you've ever been around dudes and horses, you've seen it a million times: the dude flails his arms and whacks his knees against the horse's ribs. That failing, he rapidly shifts his behind back and forth in the saddle as if momentum will start the damn thing rolling. I tried all of these until my horse lost patience and began to shake his head threateningly and clack its teeth. John and Eddy rode back to see what was wrong.

As if I were the first man on earth this had ever happened to, I attempted to explain the problem. Eddy suggested slapping the horse with the reins. I'd tried that, I said defensively, but nothing had worked. And my hour was ticking by. I was paying for this. John returned to the stables to tell the old cowboy.

There were other eyes on me. To my right, the giant girl in pedal-pushers sat on a fine western saddle, astride a handsome roan. She wasn't scowling any more, she was smiling.

The last thing I remember clearly was seeing John trot back into view from the corner of a shed. Then everything went crazy. My horse sensed it before I did and lurched sideways so abruptly my hat flew off. A sort of buckskin-colored guided missile *roared* past John and headed for me at blurring speed. It was the old cowboy, on the horse that would kick me over the roof. With a horrible squeal, my own beast plunged down the rock pile, and I slid off the saddle. My right foot came out of its stirrup. I grabbed for the pommel but, on English saddles, there isn't one. At this point my horse was flinging itself in a mad circle. The old cowboy sought to calm it with a whip lash

across its face. The saddle slipped sideways, there was a loud pop, and I was on the ground.

Receding hoof beats. Dirt in my mouth. Pain.

Through the rising dust, I saw John and Eddy gaping at me with such alarm, I thought I might have a serious wound.

"There's yer hat," said the giant girl. It hung neatly on a twig, looking very new and ridiculous. "Yer sittin' on yer glasses." She turned her horse efficiently and rode away.

When I realized I could still move my fingers and toes, I told my friends to ride on. I'd catch up as soon as I found my stupid horse.

"Your horse ran away," said Eddy. Now that he'd said that, I could hear violent thrashes and the old cowboy cussing somewhere deep in the bramble.

"Y'all go on," I said valiantly, thanking God my horse had run away. I used my dirty shirttail to wipe the dirt off my glasses, took a feeble step, and almost fell down again. I'd

tripped over something. The stirrup was still attached to my left boot. The strap had broken off. *English saddles.*

An hour later, as soon as John and Eddy had returned from the trail and checked in their horses, I started lobbying for the broken strap theory. I had to convince them that I'd fallen off *because the stirrup broke*, not because I was a dude. "Those English saddles are pieces of crap," I said with authority. John and Eddy couldn't agree more. Next time we'd all insist on real saddles. They'd let me off easy, and I knew it.

When the Falcon swung into the drive, I braced myself for the more crucial reckoning. My brand-new slacks were filthy and there was a bloody rip in the elbow of my green and beige shirt, a *school* shirt. My glasses would no longer sit straight on my nose. Mother had cautioned me, I knew that.

But almost immediately after we'd climbed into the car, Eddy began to laugh. Like hiccups, he couldn't stop. Mom thought that was pretty funny, too, and she joined in. Everybody, except me, laughed. Then John howled, "Bob fell off his horse!" and it was ho ho ho, ha ha ha all the way home.

It wasn't really my last ride. Later, I made friends with a kid whose family owned horses and I got what I wanted: a real saddle and a horse content to follow the leader at a nice, easy pace. But times were changing. By my sixteenth birthday I'd already begun the move to a new stage: beatnik poet. Kerouac. Zen. It was time to redecorate.

DINING

(Continued from page 28)

secrets of a truly flavorful *coq-au-vin* is to make it a day ahead then slowly reheat it.

Dessert was an airy meringue shell filled with a poached pear, topped with a raspberry coulis and vanilla ice cream, then ringed by a fruit compote of sliced apple, orange sections, and whole raspberries. The other selection, profiterolles, is a house standard and a favorite among regulars: tiny *pâté à choux* pastry balls, filled with vanilla ice cream and topped with a velvety hot fudge sauce.

Other evenings you might find grilled salmon with sorrel sauce, duck breast with potato gratin, or a seafood *quenelle* (mousse) with saffron sauce and homemade noodles. A roasted and grilled vegetable platter with an aromatic *pistou* (basil, tomato paste, olive oil, and garlic) topped with fried capers is offered regularly as a third entrée.

Jean-Luc's French Bistro is located at 705 Colorado Street (494-0033). Dinner only: Monday through Thursday 6–10pm, Friday & Saturday 6–11pm, and Sunday 5–9pm. Prix fixe menu Sunday and Monday only, $16.95.

Bitter End Bistro and Brewery

An unexpected place to find an upscale *prix fixe* menu is the collegial-looking Bitter End Bistro, which features two oversized TVs, a room-length bar, and split-level dining in the downtown warehouse district. Noisy and bustling, it has a party-like atmosphere that makes it a lively place to go with a group of friends.

When quizzed about what kind of restaurant the Bitter End is, some fellow Austinites thought it was a brewery—a hearty-drinking, some-snacking kind of place. True, it is a brewery—a terrific one at that—with five house brews (try the full-flavored Austin Pale Ale) and a specialty brew that changes daily (there is also a good selection of wines). The Bitter End, however, is also an American-style bistro, part of the San Gabriel restaurant group, which offers some of the city's more uptown dining at the Granite Cafe, Mezzaluna, and even the Hang Town Grill. Thus, it has a "family" reputation to uphold—which it does.

The *Chef de Cuisine* is Kathryn Mathis, the sous chef at Mezzaluna two years ago, who was recently voted one of the city's "Top Ten to Watch" by the daily newspaper. Mathis allows her sous chef Marc Marchand to take center stage each Sunday and Monday when the restaurant offers a tempting choice of two, three-course *prix fixe* dinners for under $15. Each offering is as pleasing to the eye and palate as it is to your wallet.

The first course is a choice between two salads from the restaurant's standard menu. The Bistro Caesar is the traditional sort: crisp, fresh romaine lettuce, anchovies, and garlic Caesar dressing topped with grated Parmesan. Anything but traditional was the large crouton served on top that was toasted homemade foccacia. The other salad was my favorite: sweet caramelized pecans, red onions, feta cheese, and mixed field greens served with a tangy balsamic vinaigrette dressing.

This particular evening the entrées were both seafood—and so fresh, I felt as if the restaurant were on the waterfront. The pan-seared drum was a handsome hunk of fish, served over a colorful melange of rice with yellow and red tomatoes and corn tortilla bits.

A jicama salsa and mango tomatillo sauce were perfect accompaniments. The result was a mixture of contrasting flavors (pungent cilantro and mild-flavored tortillas) and textures (crunchy jicama and soft fish). The other choice was an artful combination of absolutely fresh salmon, grilled with herbs and garlic, served on a bed of mixed field greens and with a creamy polenta on the side.

A rich dessert was a delightful counterpoint to an otherwise healthy seafood meal: a dense dark chocolate espresso terrine with raspberries, pecans, and whipped cream. The more disciplined would enjoy a pot de crème with fresh strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries. *Trés bon.*

The Bitter End Bistro and Brewery, 311 Colorado (478-2337). Lunch: Monday through Friday 11:30am–2pm. Dinner: Monday through Sunday 5:00–10:30pm. Prix fixe *menu Sunday and Monday only, $12.50 and $14.50.*

Bat Man

(Continued from page 34)

has been one of those polarizing things. And I can see why people get upset over the Endangered Species Act. Some (people) have gotten away with clubbing others over the head with it."

Tuttle has never had anything to club anyone over the head with, and this has forced him to take a different approach. Bats had so little public appeal when BCI was formed that the Endangered Species Act was no help, he says. "Anybody who wanted to save bats was totally powerless. You couldn't get the strongest legislation ever created for endangered species to work (for bats) because in the end everything goes back to public support."

The only options, he found, were "very friendly negotiations" and influencing public opinion with information and entertainment.

Petitions circulate, concerned citizens speak before the city council, and stories reach the front page: "Bats Sink Teeth Into City." Fear and superstition, the age-old enemies of the bat, move in for the kill.

In 1986 Merlin Tuttle left his position as curator of mammals at the Milwaukee Public Museum and stepped into the unknown. "Everybody thought I was crazy. In a field like mine, you might have that kind of full-time research job come open once in a lifetime."

But BCI had grown to take up more and more of his time. Even before leaving the museum, he spoke about bats to "almost any group that would listen." In one month, he recalled, he had 21 speaking engagements and several media appearances, including *Good Morning America,* the *Today Show, Late Night with David Letterman*, and *Newton's Apple.* He was often accompanied by Zuri, a flying fox he brought back from Kenya in 1984, and hundreds of his own photographs and slides.

BCI quickly won the support of the National Geographic Society. And a front-page article in the *Wall Street Journal* (which by no coincidence ran on Halloween) caught the attention of Bill Walker, the president and chief executive officer of Bacardi Imports, whose rum has featured a fruit bat on its logo since 1862. "He had some big ideas, and I'm thinking 'Good Lord, Merlin, you better come up with something more than a $5,000 secretary.'"

Part of his answer was to take BCI full time and move it to Austin. Texas intrigued Tuttle. It is home to 33 of America's 45 bat species and several huge populations, including the world's largest concentration of the mammals: 20 million bats at Bracken Cave near San Antonio. More importantly, Austin had become "the negative bat publicity capital of North America," Tuttle says, because of the concentration of Mexican free-tails under the Congress Avenue Bridge. "You could read articles in the Milwaukee Journal or the Chicago Tribune about how hundreds of thousands of rabid bats were invading and attacking the good citizens of Austin."

(Continued on page 44)

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BAT MAN

(Continued from page 43)

Tuttle saw it as a good test of his brand of environmentalism. "Basically, I bit off a challenge that was so outrageously impossible that nobody thought there was a ghost of a chance I would succeed. But I figured that any place that had enough bats and enough media access to generate that much negative publicity could be turned around to become an ideal location for educating people. And it has."

Tuttle showed slides and introduced Austinites to Zuri. He went to the top and to the classrooms, telling them the million or so bats under the Congress Avenue bridge could easily eat 30,000 pounds of insects a night. "We got a few of the leading citizens interested, and then we gave out educational materials to the schools. Within a year, the schools had bat clubs, and the kids were wearing bat pins and making their own bat T-shirts."

Still there was fear. Tuttle talked residents through it using the wealth of statistics he had accumulated over the years. "The problem is, they're all terrified of getting rabies. We asked them, did you ever know of anybody getting rabies from any source? No? Well, then I guess you didn't know anybody who got rabies from a bat. What would you think if I told you that rabies is now the second rarest disease in America behind polio, that only one person a year gets it out of the 260 million people in this country? I guess you'd be really frightened of it, huh?"

The question-and-answer session included several fixtures of everyday life that are much more dangerous statistically than bats, including dogs, bees, wasps, skiing, and spouses. "And usually in any audience I can have these people laughing damn near hysterically very quickly just by asking questions."

These early years in Austin convinced him his approach was right. "I keep going back to the basics. First question, then listen, respect, and entertain. We have to find common ground and be willing to bend. Once we realize this, about 95 percent of the world's problems would go away."

In 1990, Mayor Lee Cooke declares Austin "The Bat Capital of America." The Austin American-Statesman *introduces Rex L. Bat, a mascot who entertains crowds at community events. In 1996, Austin's new professional hockey team takes the name "The Austin Ice Bats."*

COWBOY BASEBALL

(Continued from page 38)

and stringent new conference rules that justified McNeil's decision, but many Alpiners thought the baseball program was abolished at Sul Ross simply to keep Mr. Herbert out of the university's affairs.

"We were on the way back from St. Joseph's, Missouri, when we stopped in Wichita Falls in the middle of the night," said Al Ogletree, the Lobos' coach from 1965 to '68. "One of the players called home, and his wife said she'd seen on TV that the baseball program had been dropped. The kids were shocked."

"Mr. Kokernot wasn't even told, and, of course, he paid for that Sul Ross ball team," said radio man Hendryx, still passionate after nearly 30 years. "He paid for their scholarships, bought their equipment, bought their uniforms. Herbert heard about it for the first time on my newscast on KVLF. Sul Ross didn't even have the courtesy to call the man who had given so much to that college and tell him they were abolishing baseball. It hurt the town's pride, and I know it hurt Herbert. He was never the same after that."

Without baseball at Sul Ross, Mr. Herbert, in what some people thought was an act of spite rather than charity, donated Kokernot Field to the local high school. But the small town school couldn't afford to maintain a multimillion-dollar sports complex. Over fifteen years the ballpark fell into disrepair, and the "HOME OF THE COWBOYS" gave way to graffiti and litter. The rose bed became a restroom for drunks. Mr. Herbert, now almost 80, kept his distance. "He couldn't even stand to drive by it," remembered Hendryx.

Having heard for years how the stadium was deteriorating, Hendryx decided to see for himself. "I went over there to look at it and was just sickened," he said. The dressing and trophy rooms were torn apart, literally destroyed. The trophies were scattered like trash underneath the bleachers. "I just went on the radio and told the story like it was."

His broadcast caused a public outcry that had long simmered beneath the surface. It also got the attention of Sul Ross' new president Bob Richardson, and athletics director Chet Sample. "A lot of us wanted to resurrect Kokernot Field and Sul Ross baseball with it," said Sample. "We wanted to do it right, and we wanted to do it while Mr.

"KIDS WOULD RATHER PLAY HERE FOR NOTHING THAN GO SOMEWHERE ELSE AND GET THEIR EDUCATION FOR FREE."

—GENE HENDRYX

Herbert was still alive."

Richardson and Sample circulated a petition that proposed Sul Ross lease Kokernot Field from the school district for a dollar a year and cover all restoration and future maintenance costs. It read, in part: "We were raised during baseball's finest years in Alpine. We saw the beauty of Kokernot Field and the glamour it brought to our town and school ... We now feel guilt and shame at the sight of the Kokernot Field of today. We feel a legend has been erased from our history...."

They took it before the school board, which promptly rejected it. "The high school just didn't want to give up control of the facility," said Hendryx. "Some of the coaches had their offices in there. Since, at the time, they had a very fine football team, they got away with it."

But in the next election, the school board was routed. Everyone who had opposed the project was defeated. When the new board convened its first meeting, it unanimously approved the Sul Ross proposal. Kokernot Field had a new lease on life.

Today Kokernot Field is once again a place where dreams come true. The Sul Ross baseball program is known for luring athletes away from conference competitors that offer full-ride scholarships. "It's Kokernot Field that makes the difference," said Hendryx. "Kids would rather play here for nothing than go somewhere else and get their education for free." Even the majors came back. When the Arizona Diamondbacks, a new expansion team, held tryouts there in 1996, professional baseball returned to Alpine.

But by far the greatest moment took place when Kokernot Field reopened on Texas Independence Day in 1984. In a show of appreciation and complete cohesion, the City of Alpine gave a standing ovation to Mr. Herbert, who, three years before his death, ambled to the field, tipped his Stetson to acknowledge the crowd and the cheers from a packed grandstand, and ushered in a new era as he threw out the first ball.

"It was just perfect." said Hendryx. "It was baseball as it should be."

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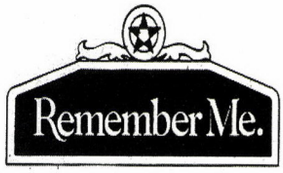

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FOOD & DINING

BY MARIE-CLAIRE QUITTELIER, REBECCA CHASTENET DE GÉRY, AND DIANE PAYTON GOMEZ

For its size, Austin has a wealth of restaurants. In fact, it boasts more restaurants per capita than any other U.S. city. Given so much to choose from, we have prepared this list of area favorites, which run the gamut from funky to cutting edge. Look for updated entries in months to come as we rotate our categories. Provided as a service to our readers, these listings are under no obligation to advertisers. Tell us about your favorite places. Send comments to P.O. Box 5307, Austin, TX 78763.

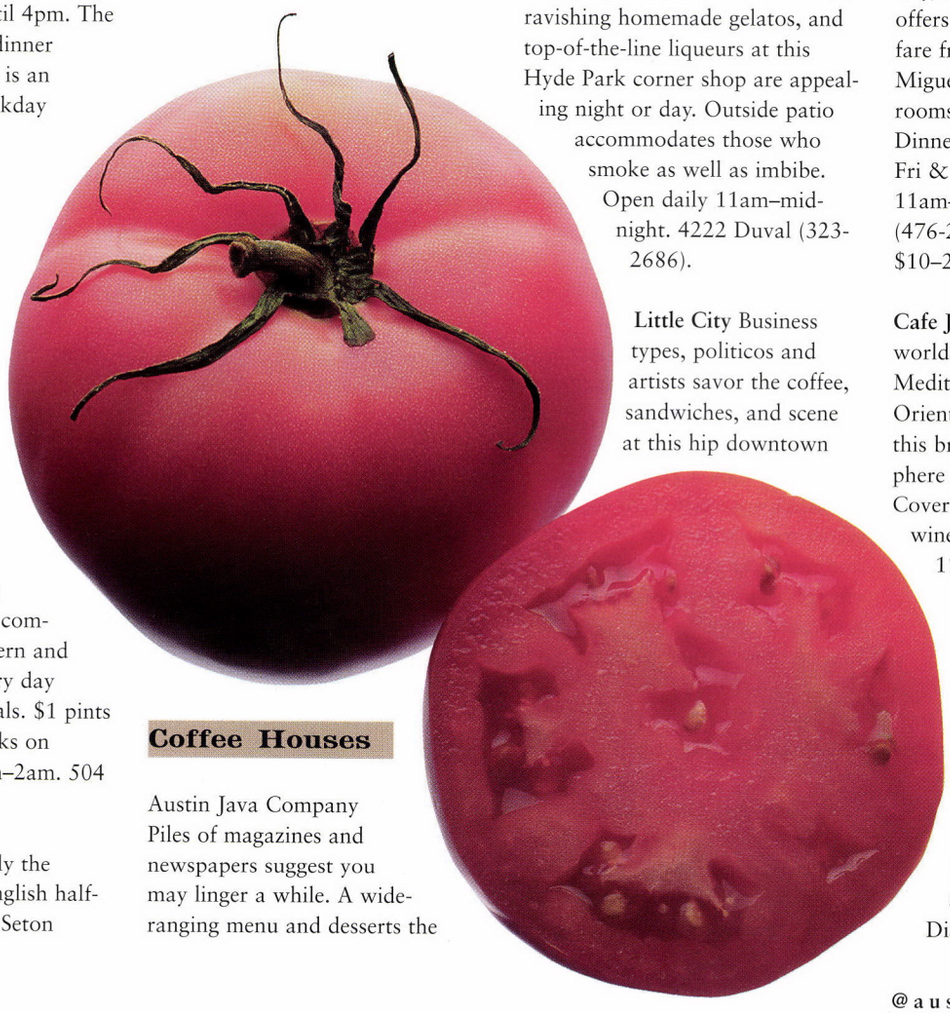
Brew Pubs

Bitter End Bistro & Brewery A stylish brew pub in the warehouse district, with imaginative takes on hearty comfort food. Special $1 half-pints Mon–Fri until 4pm. The three-course *prix fixe* dinner Sundays and Mondays is an exceptional value. Weekday lunch 11:30am–2pm. Dinner Mon–Thurs 5:30–10:30pm, Fri & Sat 5:30–11pm. Sun 5–10:30pm. 311 Colorado (478-2337). Dinner entrées $9.50–18.50.

Copper Tank Brewing Company A spacious sports-and-cigar bar, this lively establishment near 6th Street has several fine ales, and the food runs the gamut from stylish comfort food to Southwestern and pizza. Happy hour every day 3–8pm. Frequent specials. $1 pints on Wednesday, $2 drinks on Fridays. Mon–Sun 3pm–2am. 504 Trinity (478-8444).

Draught Horse Formerly the Draught House, this English half-timbered building near Seton Hospital is a casual (and smaller) cousin to the stylish downtown brew pubs. It serves six homemade beers as well as eighty other selections on tap. Reduced prices 3–7pm daily. Live music. Mon–Sat 3pm–2am, Sun 3pm–midnight. 4112 Medical Parkway (452-6258).

Waterloo Brewing Company The oldest brew pub in Texas, this casual downtown spot offers four regular beers and several seasonals, all named for famous Austinites. Pints for $1.25 are quaffed every day 5–6pm (the "Happiest Hour"), $2.25 all day Sun, Mon & Tues. The in-house American Grill will satisfy your hunger. Roof garden. Mon–Sat 11am–2am, Sun noon–midnight. 401 Guadalupe (477-1836).



Coffee Houses

Austin Java Company Piles of magazines and newspapers suggest you may linger a while. A wide-ranging menu and desserts the size of small Frisbees make this quirky, low-key spot a happening place anytime. Mon–Fri 7am–midnight. Sat 8am–midnight. Sun 8am–11pm. 1206 Parkway (476-1829). Menu items $5–10. A second location at 13376 Research is in the works.

HighLife Cafe Sink into the sofas, browse through the magazines, newspapers and books or pore over the day's New York Times at the bar. There's nothing to hurry you at this coffeehouse by day and wine bar by night. High ceilings and a ventilation system make this unassuming downtown spot smoker friendly. Sun–Wed 9am–midnight. Thurs–Sat 9am–1am. 407 E. 7th (474-5338).

Dolce Vita The simple, polished decor, sophisticated coffee drinks, ravishing homemade gelatos, and top-of-the-line liqueurs at this Hyde Park corner shop are appealing night or day. Outside patio accommodates those who smoke as well as imbibe. Open daily 11am–midnight. 4222 Duval (323-2686).

Little City Business types, politicos and artists savor the coffee, sandwiches, and scene at this hip downtown oasis, where you line up at night for a table and a view of who's doing what after hours. Mon–Fri 8am–midnight. Sat 9am–midnight. Sun 9am–10pm. 916 Congress (476-2489).

Mozart's Coffee Roasters This waterfront coffeehouse draws a more established crowd to its candlelit tables overlooking Lake Austin. Straightforward sweet offerings and freshly roasted brews. Live music Thurs–Sun evenings. Mon–Thurs 7am–11pm. Fri 7am–1am. Sat 8am–1am. Sun 8am–11pm. 3826 Lake Austin Blvd. (477-2900).

Contemporary

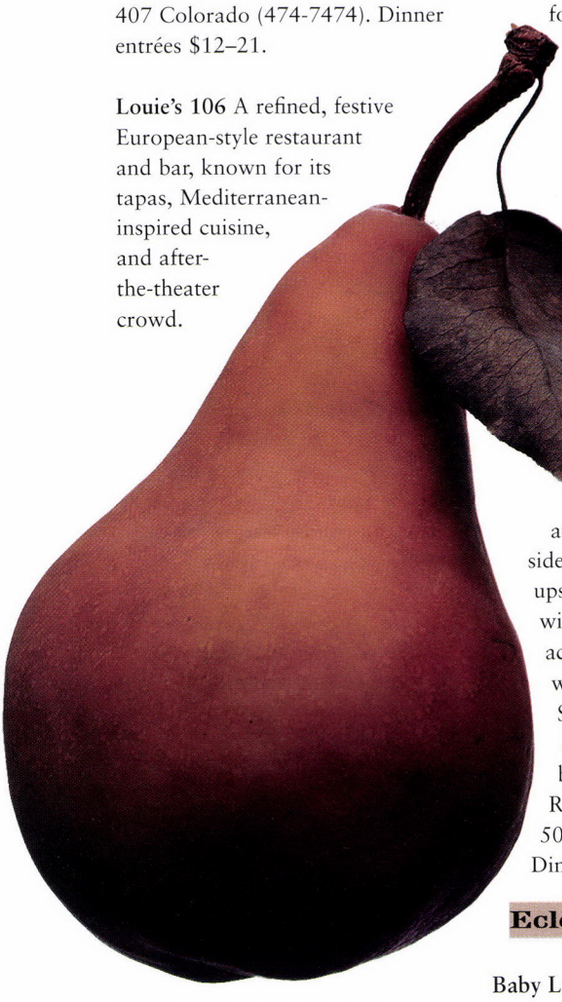
Bertram's Restaurant and Bar A downtown restaurant housed in an airy, renovated historic building offers sophisticated Hispanic Texas fare from veteran Austin chef Miguel Ravago. Bar. Private dining rooms. Reserved parking at night. Dinner only Mon–Thurs 5–10pm. Fri & Sat 5–11pm. Sunday brunch 11am–2:30pm. 1601 Guadalupe (476-2743). Dinner entrées $10–20.

Cafe Josie Upscale fare from the world's spice zones—Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Orient—captures the spotlight at this bright cafe, where the atmosphere is casual, yet elegant. Covered outdoor patio. Beer & wine. Lunch Mon–Sun 11am–3pm. Dinner Mon–Sat 5:30–10pm. Closed Sundays. 1200-B W. 6th (322-9226). Dinner entrées $10–18.

Gilligan's Seafood A popular restaurant in the warehouse district that offers a contemporary menu with Caribbean- and Cajun-style seafood specialties. Distinguished wine list.

Weekday lunch 11:15am–2pm. Dinner Mon–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri & Sat 5–11pm, Sun 5:30–9:30pm. 407 Colorado (474-7474). Dinner entrées $12–21.

Louie's 106 A refined, festive European-style restaurant and bar, known for its tapas, Mediterranean-inspired cuisine, and after-the-theater crowd.



Distinguished wine list. Private dining rooms. Weekday lunch. Mon–Thurs 11:15am–10:30pm. Dinner Sat & Sun 5–11pm. Valet parking at night. 106 E. 6th (476-2010). Dinner entrées $11.50–18.

Mars Restaurant A cozy, fashionable restaurant with a varied, eclectic menu marked by an Asian influence. One choice example is the bouillabaisse in a spicy Thai broth. Dinner only. Cozy bar. Tues–Thurs 5:30–10:30pm. Fri & Sat 5:30–11pm. Sun & Mon 5:30–10pm. 1610 San Antonio (472-3901). Dinner entrées $10–20.

Pacific Moon Elegant cuisine with Asian accents, influenced by the renowned Susanna Foo. Save room for the decadent Ginger Crème Brûlée. Bar. Weekday lunch 11:30am–2:30pm. Dinner Mon–Sat 5:30–10pm. Sun 5:30–9pm. 2712 Bee Caves (328-8888). Dinner entrées $11–18.

Shoreline Grill Chef Dan Haverty has developed a seasonal menu for sophisticated diners who enjoy a view of Town Lake and the nightly sortie of the Congress Avenue bats. Bar. Free underground parking. Open daily. Weekday lunch 11am–5pm. Dinner Sun–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri & Sat 5–10:30pm. 98 San Jacinto (477-3300). Dinner entrées $12–24.

Zoot Refined bistro atmosphere in a cozy west-side cottage. Changing, upscale, contemporary cuisine with European and Asian accents. Nationally acclaimed wine list. Dinner only Sun–Thurs 5:30–10:30, Fri & Sat 5:30–11. Sunday brunch 11am–2pm. Reservations recommended. 509 Hearn (477-6535). Dinner entrées $13–22.

Eclectic

Baby Louie's Chef Alan Somers prepares heart-healthy pasta and seafood specialties in a relaxed setting on Kerbey Lane. Covered outdoor dining. Breakfast & brunch on weekends. Weekday lunch 11am–2pm. Dinner Mon–Fri 5:30–10pm, Sat & Sun 5:30–9pm. Sat brunch 10am–3pm. Sun brunch 9:30am–3pm. 1 Jefferson Square (458-2148). Dinner entrées $9–15.

Castle Hill Cafe A bustling Austin landmark appreciated for its imaginative menu influenced by French and American cuisine. Menu changes every two weeks. Good wines and sinful desserts. Weekday lunch 11am–2:30pm. Dinner Mon–Sat 6–10pm. Closed Sundays. 1101 W. 5th (476-0728). Dinner entrées $12–19.

Chez Zee Tasty fare served with a flair in a bright, folk-art-lined location. A favorite spot for executive breakfasts. Live piano music on Fri & Sat evenings as well as Sunday brunch. In-house bakery. Bar. Mon–Thurs 7am–10:30pm. Fri 7am–11:30. Sat 9am–11:30pm. Sun 9am–10:30pm. 5406 Balcones (454-2666). Dinner entrées $8–14.

Eastside Cafe Laid-back yet refined dining, this cozy house just east of I-35 grows its own vegetables and herbs. Generous servings (half portions available) and a wide vegetarian selection. Mon–Thurs 11am–10pm. Fri 11am–11pm. Sat 11am–11pm. Sun 11am–10pm. Saturday and Sunday brunch until 3pm. Reservations recommended. 2113 Manor (476-5858). Dinner entrées $9–17.

Granite Cafe This upstairs eatery, a favored crossroads for West Austin residents, features a changing, eclectic cuisine in a comfortable setting. Reasonable wine list. Covered patio dining. Bar. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10pm. Fri & Sat 11:30am–11pm. Sun 11:30am–10pm. Saturday & Sunday brunch until 3pm. 2905 San Gabriel (472-6483). Dinner entrées $9–19.

Z-Tejas A stylish restaurant with a wide range of tasty offerings. The West End location is famous for its 2-for-1 weekday breakfasts, the Arboretum, for its sleek decor and view of the hills. Both locations feature Saturday and Sunday brunch, bar, and late-night weekend dining. Sixth Street hours: Mon–Thurs 7am–11pm; Fri 11am–midnight; Sat 10am–midnight; Sun 10am–10pm. Arboretum: Mon–Thurs 11am–10:30pm. Free valet parking at night at both locations. 1110 W. 6th (478-5355) and 9400 Arboretum Blvd. (346-3506). Dinner entrées $11–19.

French

Chez Nous Austin's veteran French

New & Interesting

Rhythm House Spain comes to Austin inside this inviting old home with an extensive patio and live music most evening. Tapas like the *champiñones al ajillo* (a garlic lover's dream), *bocadillas* (build-'em-yourself Mediterranean sandwiches with an ultra-light hollandaise sauce), and the traditional potato-laden *tortilla española* take top honors along with the surprisingly authentic *paella* spiked with saffron and piled high with shrimp and chorizo. Half-price tapas and drink specials (wine from Spain and South America in abundance) at Happy Hour 4–7pm Tues–Fri. Open daily. Lunch 11am–2pm. Dinner 4pm–midnight. 624 W. 34th Street (458-4411).

Si Bon Peter O'Brien, who made a name for himself as a creative chef at the Granite Cafe, Azzurro's, and most recently Bertram's, has his own restaurant in a cozy cottage just south of the river. The humble appearance (there's not even a sign) and simple decor belie an imaginative, sophisticated menu that has always been his forte. The wafer-thin beef carpaccio and grilled prawns with pistachio miso mustard sauce were elegant introductions to a seasonal à la carte menu that ranges from a rich Mediterranean fish stew to a classic New York strip steak in cabernet sauce, and more. Dinner only. Reservations recommended. A Sunday brunch is on the horizon. Tues–Thurs 6–10:30pm, Fri & Sat 6–11pm. 801 S. Lamar (326-8323).

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restaurant has been turning out classic Gallic fare since 1982 in a charming bistro setting. The three-course *prix fixe* dinner is a daily favorite. Lunch Tues–Fri 11:45am–2pm. Dinner Tues–Sun 6–10:30pm. Closed Mondays. Valet parking at night. 510 Neches (473-2413). Dinner entrées $14–20.

Jean-Luc's French Bistro An authentic French bistro serving homestyle favorites from France's countryside. Three-course *prix fixe* dinner Sundays and Mondays. Carefully chosen wine list features little-known *crus* from across France. Desserts to die for. Daily specials. Mon–Thurs 6–10pm. Fri & Sat 6–11pm. Sun 5–9pm. 705 Colorado (494-0033). Dinner entrées $10–20.

La Madeleine French Bakery and Cafe A popular cafe serving breakfast, sandwiches, soups, quiche, salads, and pasta cafeteria style. Freshly baked breads, pastries, and rich coffees draw a morning crowd. Seasonal wine tastings at the Lamar location. Sun–Thurs 7am–10pm. Fri & Sat until 11pm. 3418 N. Lamar (302-1485); 9828 Great Hills Trail (502-2474); and 701 Capital of Texas Hwy. (306-1998).

Homestyle

County Line Barbeque with a view greets diners at both locations, where slow-smoked brisket and mammoth beef ribs take top honors. Turkey and chicken get the same treatment, and there are killer desserts. Bar. Open daily 11:30am–9pm. 5204 RM 2222 (346-3664) and 6500 W. Bee Caves (327-1742). Entrées $9–19.

Fadó Irish Pub Substantial portions, fresh ingredients, and the lively atmosphere of an Irish pub in the heart of the warehouse district draws a crowd every day. Celtic music outside on the patio Wed, Thurs & Sun nights. Lunch 11:15am–3pm. Dinner 3–11pm. Traditional Irish breakfasts 11:15am–4pm Sat & Sun only. 214 W. 4th (457-0172). Dinner entrées $9–19.

Fresh Planet Healthy food with style and flavor by inventive chef David Garrido served counter style at Whole Foods Market's stylishly revamped upstairs restaurant. Fresh juices, smoothies, organic wines, and imported beer. 601 N. Lamar (476-0902). Nothing over $10.

Hangtown Grill Bright, primary colors, comfortable booths, tall tables and counter service greet diners at this casual eatery, a favorite of families and folks on the run. Wood-fired individual pizzas, mesquite-grilled sandwiches, "designer" burgers, and kids' menu make it special. Times vary by location. 2828 Rio Grande (476-8696); 9828 Great Hills Trail (349-9944); and 701 Capital of Texas Hwy. (347-1039).

Hula Hut Atmosphere and attitude along with a Polynesian-cum-Mexican menu. Great appetizers and drink specials. Fabulous lakeside location. Two bars. Boat dock. Sun–Thurs 11am–10pm. Fri & Sat 11am–11pm (bars stay open until midnight). Valet parking on the weekend. 3825 Lake Austin Blvd. (476-4852). Dinner entrées $7–14.

Hyde Park Bar & Grill A convivial neighborhood bistro, literally "at the fork" on Duval, serving a homestyle menu with a contemporary twist. Along with late-night dining, the cafe's battered French fries and weekend brunches are local favorites. Bar. Open daily 11am–12 midnight. 4206 Duval (458-3168). Dinner entrées $6–12

Kerbey Lane Cafe Home-grown food in a homey atmosphere keep this cafe filled 24 hours a day. The menu includes earthy vegetarian fare, burgers, Tex-Mex classics, as well as a variety of breakfast foods. Late-night specials, senior citizen discounts, and Tuesday discounts for kids. Open daily. Beer & wine. 3704 Kerbey Lane (451-1436); 12602 Research (258-7757); and 2700 S. Lamar (445-4451).

Pearl's Oyster Bar A sleek restaurant that offers savory New Orleans–style seafood, spicy Cajun fare, late-night dining, and one of the only live-music venues north of downtown. Bar. Music starts at 10pm. Open daily. Sun–Wed 11am–midnight. Thurs, Fri & Sat 11am–2am. 9033 Research (339-7444). Dinner entrées $10–20.

Ruby's Barbeque This small spot off the Drag serves up serious Texas barbecue using beef free of those growth hormones. Ruby's also serves Cajun specialties. Open daily. Sun–Thurs 11am–midnight. Fri & Sat 11am–2am. 512 W. 29th (477-1651).

Shady Grove Cafe Heaping hamburgers, vegetarian offerings, classic cobblers, and pitchers of beer in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere. Outdoor dining under a pecan grove. Open daily. Sun–Thurs 11am–10:30pm. Fri & Sat 11am–11pm. 1624 Barton Springs (474-9991). $5–8.

Texicalli Grill A south Austin institution, this festive little roadhouse, its walls and ceiling plastered with local music paraphernalia, has served salads, burgers, plate dinners, and sandwiches to customers for over 15 years. Unlike many burger joints, Texicalli uses fresh ingredients. Mon–Thurs 7am–4pm; Fri 7am–9pm. Sat 7am–4pm. Closed Sundays. 534 E. Oltorf (442-2799).

Threadgill's Restaurant A down-home restaurant offering generous portions of comfort food amid Austin music-scene memorabilia. Outdoor patio. Bar. Live music on Mondays at Riverside location, Wednesdays at the fabled N. Lamar location. Open daily. Sun–Sat 11am–10pm. 6416 N. Lamar (451-5440) and Threadgill's World Headquarters, 301 W. Riverside (472-9304). Supper prices $6–9.

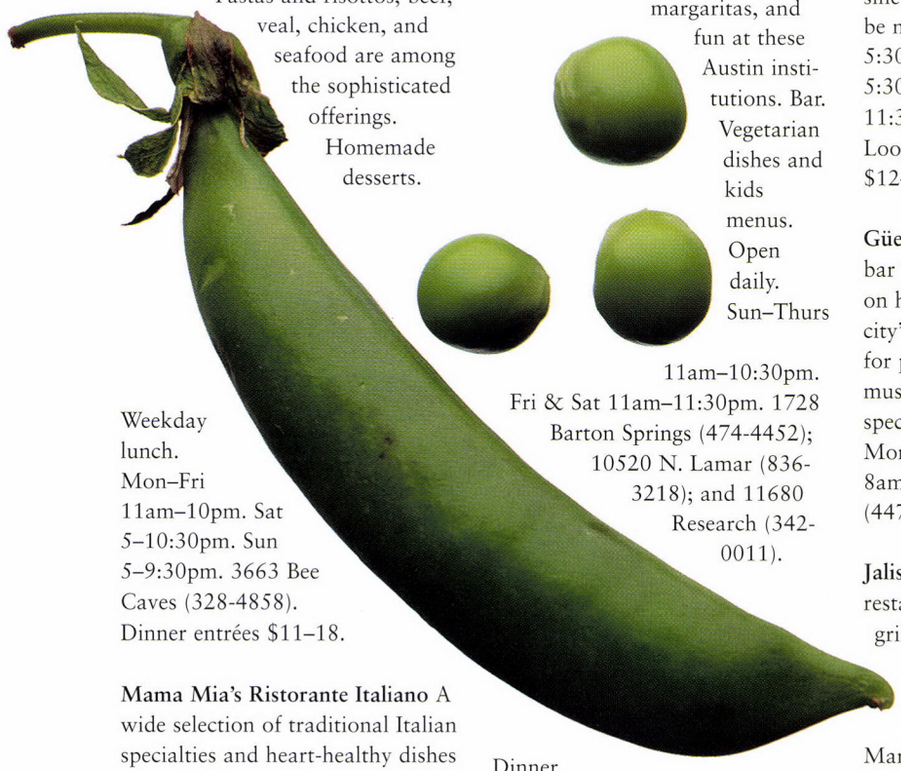
Waterloo Ice House Known for its oversize burgers, daily lunch specials, and extensive beer selection, Waterloo is also a venue for new as well as established folk, country, and jazz musicians. Open daily. Sun–Sat 11am–10pm. 600 N. Lamar (472-5400); 1106 W. 38th (451-5245); and 8600 Burnet (458-6544). Menu prices $3–7.

Italian

Basil's Restaurant The perfect spot to enjoy an intimate dinner, this cozy restaurant has a menu that features classic Italian (and off-the-menu) favorites executed with panache. Nightly specials and decadent desserts. Distinguished wine list. Dinner only. Sun–Thurs 6–10pm. Fri & Sat 6–10:30pm. 900 W. 10th (477-5576). Dinner entrées $9–19.

Cafe Spiazzo A low-key, comfortable neighborhood bistro tucked away in a small strip center off RM 2222 serving reasonably priced pizzas, pastas, meat, and fish dishes with a Northern Italian flair. Take out. Sun–Thurs 11–10pm. Fri & Sat 11–11pm. 5416 Parkcrest (459-9960). Dinner entrées $6–11.

Madam Nadalini's The architecture by Dick Clark tips you off that this is no ordinary restaurant. The cuisine is decidedly light, with a focus on Northern Italy. Pastas and risottos, beef, veal, chicken, and seafood are among the sophisticated offerings. Homemade desserts. Weekday lunch. Mon–Fri 11am–10pm. Sat 5–10:30pm. Sun 5–9:30pm. 3663 Bee Caves (328-4858). Dinner entrées $11–18.



Mama Mia's Ristorante Italiano A wide selection of traditional Italian specialties and heart-healthy dishes to satisfy almost any taste. Saturday & Sunday brunch. Cigar bar and bar. Open daily. Sun–Thurs 10am–10pm. Fri & Sat 11am–11pm. 8015 Shoal Creek Blvd. (451-0177) and 13376 Research (335-8008). Dinner entrées $8–18.

Mezzaluna A stylish, happening downtown restaurant in the warehouse district known for its Bellinis, antipasti, exceptional wines and lively bar. Open daily. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10:30pm. Fri 11:30–11pm. Sat 6–11pm, Sun 6–10pm. 310 Colorado (472-6770). Dinner entrées $9–22.

Stelline Pastaria This tidy Italian bistro in a strip shopping center specializes in classic Italian pasta dishes along with upscale meat and seafood entrées. Lunch patrons favor the panini. Bar. Take out. Open daily. Mon–Thu 11am–10pm. Fri 11am–11pm. Sat 4pm–11pm. Sun 4pm–9pm. 2501 Parmer Lane, Suite 550 (339-8823). Dinner entrées $8–16.

Mexican

Chuy's Tex-Mex in a festive setting where Elvis still lives. Join the crowd for traditional fare, good margaritas, and fun at these Austin institutions. Bar. Vegetarian dishes and kids menus. Open daily. Sun–Thurs 11am–10:30pm. Fri & Sat 11am–11:30pm. 1728 Barton Springs (474-4452); 10520 N. Lamar (836-3218); and 11680 Research (342-0011). Dinner entrées $6–8.50.

Curra's A small, no-frills restaurant that serves tasty Tex-Mex as well as interior Mexican specialties. Breakfast, weekday lunch, and weekend specials. Sun–Sat 7am–10pm. 614 E. Oltorf (444-0012). Dinner entrées $7–16.

El Sol y La Luna A pleasant transformation of a retro Congress Avenue motel restaurant. Traditional Tex-Mex with an emphasis on fresh. Breakfast all day. Fresh squeezed orange juice. Sun–Tues 7am–3pm. Wed–Sat 7am–10pm. 1224 S. Congress (444-7770). Menu items $5–9.

El Rinconcito Cocina Mexicana This cozy restaurant has a devoted following for its blend of Tex-Mex favorites and South American specialties. Weekday lunch specials and Sunday brunch. Beer, wine & margaritas. Mon–Thurs 11am–10pm. Fri 11am–11pm. Sat 5–11pm. Sunday brunch 11am–2, dinner 5–10pm. 1014 N. Lamar (476-5277). Dinner entrées $6.50–14.

Fonda San Miguel Antique wooden doors open into a Mexican hacienda that offers a feast for the eyes as well as the palate. Sophisticated interior Mexican cuisine. The Sunday brunch is not to be missed. Sun–Thurs 5:30–9:30pm, Fri & Sat 5:30pm–1am. Sunday brunch 11:30am–2pm. 2330 W. North Loop (459-4121). Dinner entrées $12–19.

Güero's Taco Bar A bustling taco bar where President Clinton dined on homemade Tex-Mex among the city's young, hip crowd. Famous for people watching and live music. Breakfast all day. Lunch specials. Bar. Take out. Open daily. Mon–Fri 7am–10pm, Sat & Sun 8am–10pm. 1412 S. Congress (447-7688). Prices $5–17.

Jalisco Bar An authentic Mexican restaurant and bar with a mesquite grill and succulent cabrito. A gathering place for the Hispanic community. Margaritas by the pitcher. Mariachis every Wednesday & Friday. Weekday lunch. Mon, Tues & Sun 11am–10pm. Wed & Thurs 11am–11pm. Fri & Sat 11am–midnight. 414 Barton Springs (476-4838). Dinner entrées $5–15.

Las Palomas Restaurant and Bar This pleasant restaurant has served skillfully prepared interior Mexican dishes since 1982. Delicate tortilla soup, exquisite shrimp with crisp garlic, and rich pork in *pibil* sauce are a few of the specialties cooked to Amelia Corona's exacting specifications. Lunch Tues–Sat 11am–2pm. Dinner Tues–Fri 5–9:30pm, Sat & Sun 5–10pm. 3201 Bee Caves (327-9889). Dinner entrées $6.25–12.

Manuel's Downtown Stylish Tex-Mex and Mex-Mex served in a sleek, contemporary location. Famous for its half-price appetizers served during weekday happy hour and until midnight on Friday and Saturday. Bar. Sun–Thurs 11am–10:30pm. Fri & Sat 10:45am–midnight. Sunday jazz brunch 11am–4pm. 310 Congress (472-7555). Dinner entrées $7–15.

ZuZu Handmade Mexican Food 3633 Bee Caves (329-0393) and 5770 N. MoPac (467-9295). Mexican food favorites are transformed at this semifast-food place with fresh herbs and vegetables, tangy citrus marinades, and a trio of exceptional salsas. Daily specials. Take out. Children's menu. Sun–Thurs 11am–9pm. Fri & Sat 11am–10pm. Sunday Brunch 9am–2pm. Menu items $5–7.

New Cuisine

Brio Vista Creative, elegant cuisine with a distinctive Asian-cum-Southwestern flair is served in stylish uptown digs near the Arboretum. Extended evening hours make this a popular spot for late-night diners. Distinguished wine list and stylish desserts. Reservations recommended on the weekends. Free valet parking. Sun–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri & Sat 5–11pm. 9400 Arboretum Blvd. (342-2642). Dinner entrées $11–20.

Café at The Four Seasons Famous for elegant dining and classic cuisine with a contemporary twist prepared by Swiss-trained Chef Elmar Prambs. A local favorite for power breakfasts, Sunday buffet brunch with champagne, and outdoor dining overlooking Town Lake. Daily lunch specials. Dinner menu changes weekly. Nationally acclaimed wine list. Mon–Sat 6:30am–11pm. Sun 7–10am (breakfast), 10:30am–2pm (brunch). Free valet parking. Reservations recommended. 98 San Jacinto (478-4500). Dinner entrées $15–27.

Hudson's on the Bend Fine dining in a Hill Country cottage surrounded by fresh herbs and flowers. Game dishes and house-smoked meats get top billing, and imaginative Southwestern sauces and glazes are unforgettable. Menu changes every two weeks. Nationally acclaimed wine list. Dinner only. Mon–Thurs 6–9:30pm. Fri & Sat 5:30–10pm. Sun 6–9pm. Reservations recommended. 3509 RM 620 N. (266-1369). Dinner entrées $22–35.

Jeffrey's Restaurant In the vanguard of Austin's fine dining for over 20 years, this intimate, unpretentious restaurant features an inspired cuisine prepared by European-trained Executive Chef David Garrido. Daily changing menu. Nationally acclaimed wine list. Bar. Dinner only. Mon–Sat 6–10pm. Closed Sundays. Reservations recommended. 1204 West Lynn (477-5584). Dinner entrées $20–27.

Asian

Pao's Mandarin House Regulars at this spacious Chinese restaurant hidden inside a downtown office building know to ask for the specialty menu. A favored place for business types at lunch, Pao's fills at dinnertime with natives and adventurous diners in search of the authentic. Lunch Mon–Sun 11am–2:30pm, dinner 4:30–10pm. No Diners Club accepted. 800 Brazos (482-8100). Dinner entrées $7–10.

Rainbow Seafood Restaurant Known for its weekend dim sum and extensive menu, this Chinese restaurant also features a variety of fresh seafood. Bar. Take out. Weekday lunch 11am–3pm, dinner 5–10pm. Sat & Sun 11am–10pm (dim sum 11am–2:30pm). 4454 S. Lamar (892-2742). Entrées $6–12.

Satay A gem of a restaurant in a North Austin shopping center featuring Thai and Indonesian dishes. Signature sauces are now packaged for gourmet stores across the country. Beer & wine. Weekday lunch Mon–Fri 11am–2:30pm. Dinner Mon–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri & Sat 5–11pm. Sunday brunch noon–3pm. 3202 W. Anderson Lane (467-6731). Dinner entrées $6–16.

Sea Dragon With a Chinese and Vietnamese menu listing more than 200 different offerings, dining at Sea Dragon need never be the same. Fare ranges from the exotic (frog legs), to the more ordinary (some 20 noodle varieties). Other than the sizable fish and lobster tanks, the decor is standard strip mall. Beer & wine. Weekday lunch 11am–2:30pm, dinner 5–10pm. Sat & Sun 11:30am–10pm. 8776-B Research in Grand Central Station (451-5051). Dinner entrées $5–13.

Suzi's China Grill The uptown counterpart to Suzi's Chinese Kitchen in sleek and stylish digs. At night, Chinese meets haute cuisine with imagination, flair, and tantalizing results. Bar. Take out. Mon–Thurs 11am–10pm. Fri & Sat 11am–11pm. 7858 Shoal Creek Blvd. (302-4600). Dinner entrées $9–15.

Taj Palace Indian Restaurant & Bar Look past the plastic table tops and busy motif and concentrate on the food—authentic Indian fare: Tandoori meats and seafood, spice-laden curries, a vegetarian selection that is far from ordinary, and several different breads freshly baked in the restaurant's traditional Tandoor. Daily lunch buffet Mon–Fri 11am–2:30pm. Dinner Sun–Thurs 5:30–10pm, Fri & Sat 5:30–10:30pm. Sunday lunch 11am–2:30pm. 6700 Middle Fiskville (452-9959). Dinner entrées $7–12.

Thai Noodles Etc. House It's the food, not the setting. Fresh, plentiful, and inexpensive bowls of Thai noodles, prepared to the same standards Foo Swasdee sets for her Satay restaurant. Daily specials. Beer & wine. Take out. Now serving breakfast. Mon–Sun 6:30am–10pm. 2602 Guadalupe, behind the 7-Eleven (494-1011). Under $6.

Thai Passion A contemporary oasis in an historical downtown building with elegant, fresh, spicy, MSG-free fare. Stir fries and traditional Thai salads share billing with noodle dishes and curries laced with coconut milk. Take out. Lunch Mon–Fri 11am–2:30pm. Dinner Sun–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri & Sat 5–10:30pm. 620 Congress (472-1244). Dinner entrées $8–14.

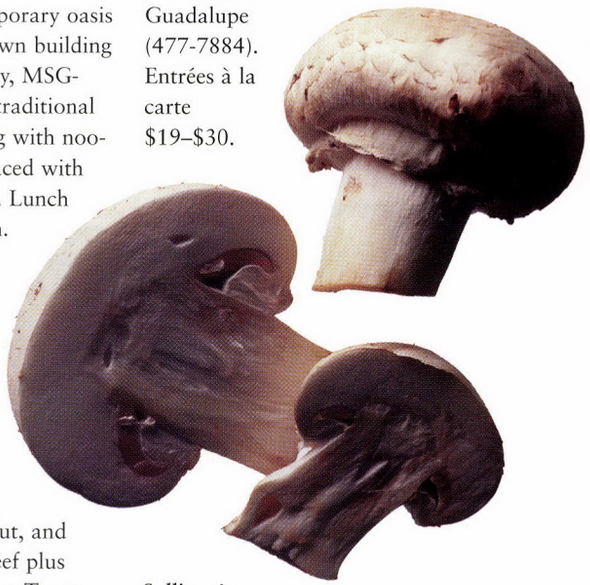
Steaks

Austin Land and Cattle Company Aged, hand-cut, and trimmed Midwestern beef plus continental cuisine with a Texas twist. Casual atmosphere, and kids are welcome. Bar. Sun–Thurs 5-10pm, Fri & Sat 5-11pm. 1205 N. Lamar (472-1813). Dinner entrées $10–$33.

The Hoffbrau Since 1934, plate-lapping T-bones and sirloins (chicken breast if you must) in a setting of unairconditioned Texas kitsch. No reservations, no credit cards, but the service is nice as pie. Weekdays only. Lunch 11am-2pm, dinner 5-8:30pm. 613 W. 6th (472-0822). $7–$13.

Dan McKluskey's Special touches, the mix-and-match steak and "other" combos and yummy desserts keep diners coming back. Downtown location: weekday lunch 11:30am–2pm, dinner seven nights a week 5–10:30pm. 301 E. 6th (473-8924). Arboretum: lunch and dinner seven days a week. Lunch noon–2pm, dinner 5–10:30pm. 10000 Research (346-0780). Dinner entrées $12–$26.

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse Once you've savored buttery U.S. Prime, your taste buds will never be the same. The garlicky mashed potatoes are more satisfying than winning the lottery. Bar. Nationally acclaimed wine list. Dinner only. Sun–Thurs 5:30–10:30pm, Fri & Sat 5:30–11pm. 3010 Guadalupe (477-7884). Entrées à la carte $19–$30.

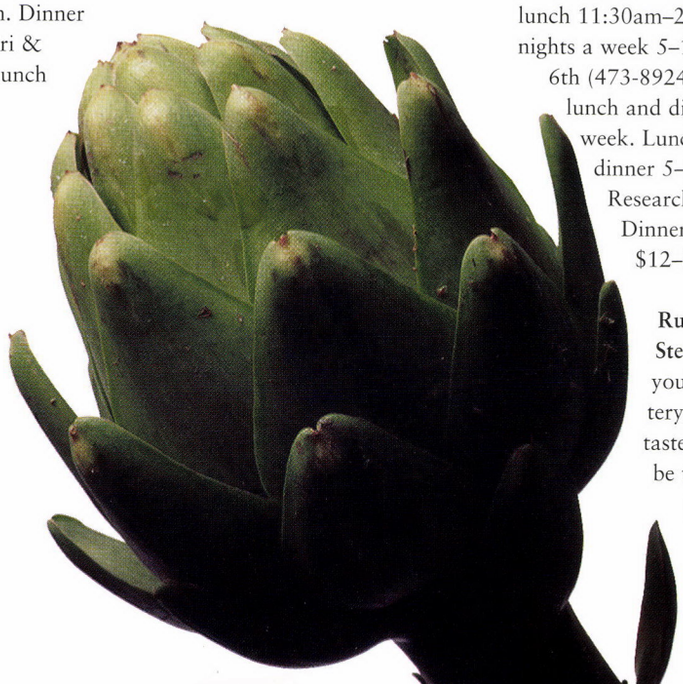


Sullivan's Steakhouse Chicago-style sophistication, the place to see and be seen. Aged Angus beef custom cut and seared to perfection. Extensive wine rack. Dinner only. Mon–Sat 5:30–11pm. Bar opens at 4:30pm. 300 Colorado (495-6504). À la carte menu only; steaks $20–26, other entrées $11–26.

Vegetarian

Mr. Natural An East Austin *taquería* that truly breaks the mold, Mr. Natural features vegetarian Mexican food in a tiny location shared with a yoga society. Off-the-beaten path, this place serves up hearty vegetarian tamales, fajitas, and enchiladas, and makes a mean chile relleno to boot. Mon–Sat 9am–7pm. Closed Sundays. 1901 E. Cèsar Chavez (477-5228).

West Lynn Cafe Upscale vegetarian cuisine with Southwestern and Mediterranean accents served in a modern, architectural transformation of a westside neighborhood gas station. Bar. Take out. Weekend brunch. Mon–Thurs 11:30am–10pm. Fri 11:30am–10:30pm. Sat 11am–10:30pm. Sun 11am–9:30pm. 1110 West Lynn (482-0950). Dinner entrées $6–10.



On Exhibit

by Stephanie Peterson and John Ferguson

The following is a selective guide to the visual arts—the organizations and galleries that regularly host major exhibitions of artwork in Austin. With distinctive media, styles, and markets, each has something unique to offer the viewer. Exhibits are free unless noted. Given the long lead time, we encourage readers to confirm dates, times, and locations.

MARGIE CRISP

Archer M. Huntington Gallery

One of the top university museums in the nation, the Huntington has two exhibition areas on campus. The gallery space on the first and second floors of the Harry Ransom Center showcases selections from its many permanent collections, which include outstanding works of 19th and 20th century art (The Michener Collection and C.R. Smith Collection of Western American Art); contemporary Latin American paintings, prints and drawings; and exact reproductions of ancient Greek and Roman statues (The William J. Battle Collection of Plaster Casts, one of only a few collections in the country). The Huntington also has a small collection of ancient Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings as well as Medieval art on loan from the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.
21st & Guadalupe (471-7324).
Hours: Mon–Sat 9am–5pm & Sun 1–5pm. Parking available for an hourly fee in the Dobie parking garage, located at 21st and Whitis.

The second exhibition area inside the Fine Arts Building (near Memorial Stadium) houses an extensive print and drawing collection and each year displays eight to ten temporary exhibitions, including student and faculty shows.
Mar 27–May 10: (Mezzanine) "Other Worldly Visions: Persian and Indian Paintings from the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution." Eleven paintings from 16th and 17th century Iran and India (on loan from the Smithsonian) will be shown in conjunction with contemporaneous European prints drawn from the Huntington's permanent collection. This is an opportunity to compare styles between these cultures having different artistic traditions.
Mar 27–May 10: (Mezzanine) "Print Study Exhibition, Spring Semester." Each semester the Huntington displays examples from its extensive collection of more than 12,000 prints and drawings. Professors in the Department of Art and Art History collaborate with the curator to select works on paper that complement media, periods, styles, and issues under consideration in their classes. At the same time, the exhibition introduces the general public to outstanding works and recent acquisitions in the collection.
Mar 27-Apr 12: (First Floor) "Art Student's Exhibition." This annual show featuring works chosen by the UT faculty to best represent current talent among the students in the studio program.
Apr 24-May 10: (First Floor) "Master of Fine Arts Exhibition." The UT studio program, recently rated one of the top ten in the nation, presents its annual exhibit featuring over 70 works by its graduate students.
23rd & San Jacinto (NE corner).
Hours: Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Thurs 'til 9pm, Sat & Sun 1–5pm.
Parking available for an hourly fee in the parking garage at 24th and San Jacinto.

Artists Coalition of Austin in the ArtPlex

Part of a collection of artists' studios and administrative offices, the ACA gallery exhibits a wide variety of artwork with an emphasis on showing members' work and related juried exhibitions.
Feb 26–Mar 14: "The Splendid Burden of Sight." Austin photographers who use the ACA Community black-and-white darkroom will expose recent developments in an eclectic mix of styles and subject matters. Opening reception **Feb 26** 6–9pm.
March 14: "Photography by Johnny Medina." This exhibition, which coincides with the South by Southwest Music Festival, will be for one night only. Medina, a well-known photographer with ties to the music scene, documents local musicians both at home and on the road. Reception 8pm–midnight.
Mar 19–Apr 4: "Go Figure III." Third annual exhibition of paintings, drawings, and sculptures representing a broad range of styles by artists who participate in the ACA Life Drawing Open Studio program. Exhibit juried by noted Austin artist Madelon Umlauf, daughter of Charles Umlauf (Umlauf Sculpture Garden). Opening Reception **Mar 19** 6–9pm.
Apr 9–May 2: "Transition." This is the first of three exhibits sponsored by the Artist's Coalition of Austin to usher in the new millennium. This all-media exhibit will not only focus on issues associated with transition but also explore new approaches and directions in

MUSEUMS

Austin History Center The building once was the old main library for the city before it became a repository in 1955 for the extensive Austin-Travis County Collection, a compilation of almost anything and everything about Austin. Archived materials include newspaper files, photos, census records, city directories, video tapes of city council meetings, and other board meetings as well as high school yearbooks. Photographs and other items from the collection are exhibited throughout the year. Hours: Mon–Thurs 9am–9pm. Fri & Sat 9am–6pm. Sun 12–6pm. 810 Guadalupe (499-7480).

Capitol Complex Visitors Center Located in the southeast corner of the Capitol grounds, the three-story stucco structure built in 1856 is the restored General Land Office Building, designed in a 19th century mock-medieval style to resemble a castle. It was the Texas Confederate Museum for 70 years after the agency moved to other quarters. The oldest surviving state office building, it was on the verge of collapse in 1989 when the Daughters of the Confederacy moved the museum to Waco. After a two-year, $4 million renovation, the building now serves as a visitor center for the Capitol. It contains historical exhibits and a gift shop, offers guided tours, and rotates exhibits on Texas history every few months. Hours: Tues–Fri 9am–5pm. Sat 10am–5pm. Closed Sundays & Mondays. 112 E. 11th (305-8400).

George Washington Carver Museum Once the city's main library at 9th and Congress, the building became the first branch library when moved to its current location in 1933. In 1980 it was converted into the George Washington Carver Museum, earning distinction as the state's first neighborhood Black-history museum. Rotating exhibits focus on African-American culture, art and history. Hours: Tues–Thurs 10am–6pm. Fri & Sat noon–5pm. 1165 Angelina (472-4809).

French Legation Dating back to 1841, the French Legation was the headquarters for the French *chargé d'affaires*, Alphonse de Saligny, who moved to Austin shortly after France officially recognized Texas as a republic. A man of taste, de Saligny fashioned the French provincial-style cottage into the most luxurious residence of the time. The house was built with Bastrop pine, the windows were imported from France, and the metalwork came from England. After Texas was annexed by the United States, the house was bought in 1848 by Dr. Joseph Robertson, and it stayed in his family for generations. Now operated by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the museum is furnished with 19th-century antiques and is believed to have the only authentic French Creole kitchen in the country. Hours: Tues–Sun 1–5pm. 802 San Marcos (472-8180). Admission: $3 adults, $2 seniors and $1 children under 18.

Governor's Mansion This graceful ante-bellum mansion is one of only four original houses in the United States still in use as a governor's residence. Despite its elegant facade, the building was originally eight spare rooms, built by master builder Abner Cook with a budget of $14,500. With only $2,500 for furnishings, its first occupant, Governor Elisha Pease and family, brought their own as did their successors. Additions to the building in 1914 almost doubled its size, but lack of state funding kept it close to its original condition. The gardens were refurbished with private funds in the 1960s and the building renovated with $3 million in the early 1980s. At that time private citizens donated the museum-quality 19th-century antiques to create the mansion's first permanent decor. Free guided tours Mon–Fri 9:30–10:20am, self-guided tours, 11:40am–noon only. 1010 Colorado (463-5516).

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum Four stories house the presidential papers and memorabilia of Lyndon Baines Johnson, a Texan from the Hill Country who became the 36th President of the United States. One of the city's most prominent works of modern architecture, the library contains invaluable archives of one of the nation's most turbulent periods, ceremonial gifts, campaign paraphernalia, as well as a replica of the Oval Office. The museum displays national touring exhibits and items from the collection, including LBJ's famous speech in which he declined to run for re-election in 1968. Hours: Mon–Sun 9am–5pm. 2313 Red River (916-5137).

Elisabet Ney Museum The Austin studio of the German-born and trained sculptor Elisabet Ney resembles a small castle. Named Formosa after her European studio, the limestone building was where she created the life-size figures of such famous Texas personalities as Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston. Ney lived in Texas for 34 years until her death in 1907. The museum, founded shortly after her death, houses her remarkable collection of marble busts, bronze statues and plaster models. There is no other artist's studio like it outside the northeast United States. Hours: Wed–Sun 10am–5pm. Sun noon–5pm. 304 E. 44th (458-2255).

Neill-Cochran Museum House This graceful Greek-Revival home, a scaled-down version of the Governor's mansion, was built by Abner Cook in 1855. Within a year it was leased to the state as an institute for the blind and nine years later as a hospital for Union troops, which are said to haunt the building. It became the home of Col. Andrew Neill in 1876 and later Judge T. B. Cochran, who expanded the house considerably. Bought from the Cochran family in 1958, the house was converted into a museum, restored, and furnished with period antiques by the Texas branch of the Colonial Dames of America. Hours: Wed–Sun 2–5pm. 2310 San Gabriel (478-2335). Admission: $2.

O. Henry Home and Museum Acclaimed as America's top short-story writer, William S. Porter once lived in this Victorian cottage in Austin, working as a draftsman and bank teller and at other assorted jobs to support himself and his family. Some of his cartoons and early stories were printed in *Rolling Stone*, a weekly paper he published on the back porch of this house. Porter's skill and style as a writer were honed while he was in prison, where he adopted the pen name O. Henry to get his stories published, and afterwards he moved to New York. The museum contains his desk, original editions of some of his work, and mementos from his home and family. Hours: Wed–Sun noon–5pm. 409 E. 5th at Neches (472-1903).

Texas Memorial Museum Dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the four-story museum and several like it across Texas originally were built as permanent memorials to the state's centennial in 1936. Now part of the University of Texas, this natural-science museum is like a local version of the New York Museum of Natural History. Its collections of rocks, minerals, Texas wildlife, Indian artifacts, and 30-foot-long fossil of a prehistoric lizard are of special interest to children. Hours: Mon–Fri 9am–5pm. Sat 10am–5pm. Sun 1–5pm. 2400 Trinity (471-1604).

the visual arts. Sharon Smith, an award-winning Austin artist, and Clint Boelshe, an important local art collector, will jury the exhibit spotlighting Austin area art. Opening reception: **Apr 9** 6–9pm.
May 4–May 30: "AVAA 21st Annual Membership Show." Professional and amateur members of the Austin Visual Arts Association exhibit work in a wide range of media and styles. Opening Reception to be announced.
1705 Guadalupe (474-7799). Hours: Tues–Fri 5–8pm & Sat 12–6pm.

Austin Museum of Art Downtown

This large interim downtown space provides immediate opportunities to hold nationally recognized exhibitions while AMOA proceeds with building a world-class art museum.
Feb 14–May 10: "American Images: the SBC Collection of Twentieth-Century American Art." This touring exhibit comprises eighty works from the SBC corporate collection of 20th-century American art, which was begun in 1985 and currently has over 1,000 works spanning the entire 20th century. The selections in this show focus on the development of modernism in American art and include works by artists who share an American nationality but also celebrate their individual cultural heritage through their art.
May 23–Aug 16: "O'Keeffe's New Mexico: Native American, Hispanic & European Traditions 1880–1996." Over 100 pieces from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, will highlight the works of Georgia O'Keeffe in the context of the art of New Mexico and feature works by the painter Marsden Hartley, Native American potter Maria Martinez, and photographer Eliot Porter. Member's preview **May 22** 6–8pm (for AMOA members only).
823 Congress, ground floor (495-9224) Hours: Tues–Sat 11–7pm, Thurs open 'til 9pm & Sun 1–5pm. Admission: $3 adults, $2 seniors & students, free for museum members and children under 12. Thursdays $1.

Austin Museum of Art at Laguna Gloria

Housed in a Mediterranean-style villa built in 1916 on the shores of Lake Austin, Laguna Gloria is the original 12-acre home of AMOA and holds exhibitions in conjunction with the museum's downtown interim space.
Mar 15–May 31: "Material World: Artists and Their Materials." The museum's annual family exhibition will explore the varied and innovative use of unconventional materials by contemporary artists. Hands-on art activities will be available for the children to enjoy with their parents.
3809 W. 35th (458-8191). Hours: Tues–Sat 10am–5pm, Thurs open 'til 9pm & Sun 1–5pm. Admission: $2 adults, $1 seniors & students, free for museum members & children under 12.

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE, AUSTIN MUSEUM OF ART, DOWNTOWN

Dougherty Arts Center—The Julia C. Butridge Gallery

The Butridge Gallery, part of a facility that offers a wide variety of classes in the arts, is operated by the Parks and Recreations Department through the City of Austin. The clean, spacious gallery is available to all artists and groups who initiate a proposal and pass a selection process. As a result, the quality varies depending on the exhibition.
Mar 5–Mar 28: "Stop and Smell the Ink." Women Printmakers of Austin presents an exhibition of their latest work, including the group's "Wildflower Portfolio," which celebrates the coming of spring. Members not only explore a variety of printmaking techniques, ranging from traditional woodcuts to cutting-edge computer-enhanced intaglio, but also express their individual styles and imagery. Opening reception **Mar 10** 6–8pm.
Apr 4–Apr 28: "Austin Community College Art Students Annual Show." This exhibit, showcasing the finest from ACC art students, offers diverse samplings and a few surprises from what the artists of tomorrow are doing today. Opening reception **Apr 7** 6–8pm.
May 2– May 27: La Peña presents an exhibition of prints from the students at Coronado Studio, a printmaking workshop that focuses on serigraphy (silk-screen printmaking). Opening reception **May 5** 6–8pm.
1110 Barton Springs (397-1455). Hours: Mon–Thurs 9am–9:30pm, Fri 9am–5:30pm & Sat 10am–2pm.

Flatbed Press

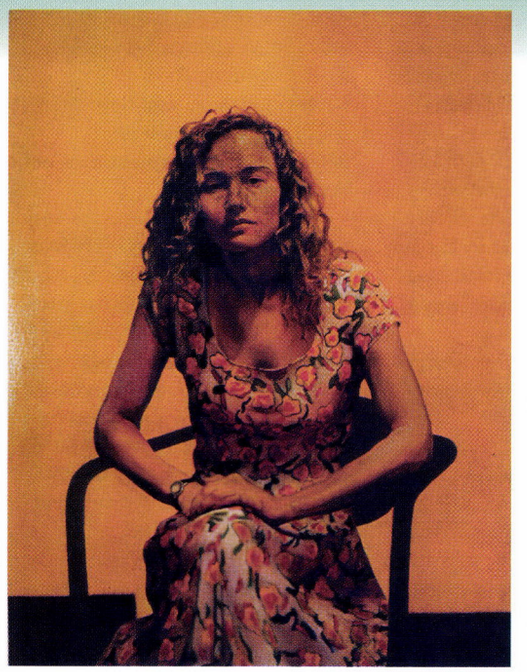
One of the largest intaglio presses in the country, located in a converted downtown warehouse, Flatbed Press publishes museum-quality limited editions of original prints by nationally established and emerging artists. The small exhibit space showcases the work of fine printmakers from around the country.
Mar 7–Apr 14: "Belinda Casey: Reverie & Requiem." An exhibition featuring a suite of intaglio prints by a long-time Austin artist whose slightly off-beat, narrative images express Casey's darkly comedic wit. Flatbed also introduces a sampling of prints by emerging artist Sharon Bright. Opening reception **Mar 6** 6–8pm.
Apr 18–May 27: "Julianne Biel: In the Moment." An exhibit featuring richly hued monotypes (one-of-a-kind prints) of the Colorado landscape. Biel, a Dallas resident, traveled to Colorado where she produced the prints on site, capturing the light of the moment. Opening reception **Apr 8** 6–8pm.
912 W. 3rd (accessible via Bowie or Baylor streets at 5th) (477-9328). Hours: Mon–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat 10am–2pm & by appointment.

Galleria Sin Fronteras

Part of the cluster of galleries north of the Capitol, the gallery "without borders" focuses on contemporary Latino artwork by artists from all over the world. The gallery also houses an exhibit space/office for Coronado Studio, a printmaking facility located in East Austin, dedicated to fine-art publishing, specifically serigraphs (silk-screen prints).
Mar 28–May 23: "Cultural Refractions: Border Life *En La Tierra De Nadie*." An exhibit of palladium prints (a delicate photographic process in which the emulsion is painted directly onto an archival rag paper) that focuses on imagery from the United States/Mexico border. The artist, Byron Brachli, is an award-winning photographer who received his MFA from the University of Texas at Austin in 1990. He currently resides in Austin. Opening reception **Mar 28** 6:30–8:30pm.
1701 Guadalupe (478-9448). Hours: Tues–Sat 11am–6pm.

Gallery Lombardi

A relatively new gallery on the



DAN DOVE, TARRYTOWN GALLERY

scene, located near Flatbed Press, this converted warehouse space joins the small arts complex by the railroad tracks near 5th and Lamar.
Mar 5–Mar 28: "Definientia." An invitational exhibition that features the work of ten Austin women whose art addresses women's issues using a variety of styles ranging from painting to multimedia installations. Artists include Stella Asesia, Livia Balan, Mary Goodwin, Barbara Irwin, Nina Jolly, Rachel Koper, Theresa Mouth, Bennét Rockett, and Theresa Steel. Opening reception **Mar 5** 6–9pm.
Apr 2–Apr 25: A portfolio of drawings and sketches by Georgia O'Keeffe, the well-known American artist, will be on display and for sale to the public. Opening reception **Apr 2** 6–9pm.
May 1–May 15 (exact dates to be confirmed): The annual exhibition of works from the graduate students at The University of Texas MFA program. Opening reception to be announced.
920 W. 3rd (accessible via Bowie or Baylor Streets at 5th) (481-1088). Hours Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm & Sat 11am–4pm.

Gallery at Shoal Creek

Established originally in 1965 as the G. Harvey Gallery, this spacious upscale gallery has undergone several transformations over the years. It features work of regionally and nationally recognized artists and emphasizes traditional representational, impressionistic imagery in oils, pastels, watercolors, and bronzes.
Feb 14–Mar 7: "Mystery, Intrigue, and the Human Figure." An exhibit that explores everyday urban life from the perspective of three New York artists. Milt Kobayashi, a third-generation Japanese American, masterfully blends elements of oriental line, pattern, and composition with spontaneous brushwork as he gives the viewer a glimpse into intimate, interior scenes reminiscent of another era. Artist and writer Gregg Kreutz creates mysterious, atmospheric imagery through color, light, and shadow. Craig Srebnik, an emerging artist who spent ten years in France before settling in Portland, Oregon, depicts ballet scenes, nude studies, and architectural spaces in a romantic, impressionistic style.
May 9–May 30: "Karen Tual: New Works." A French artist, Tual works in a naive painting style that depicts rural scenes of the hamlets and red-roofed villages surrounding her home. Opening reception **May 9** 2–4pm.
May 16–May 30: "Richard Wawro." The works by a Scottish autistic savant who creates powerful imagery in a primitive style will be exhibited in conjunction with a 15-year anniversary celebration of the making of a documentary about the life and art of Richard Wawro. The documentary will be shown at the gallery, and a reception for the artist will be announced at a future date.
1500 W. 34th (454-6671). Hours: Tues–Fri 9am–5pm & Sat 10am–5pm.

Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

As its name implies, the Humanities Research Center is devoted to scholarly investigations in the humanities. Main collections include major holdings in English literature from the 15th century to the present (Book Collection); Americana; and the history of architecture (Ben Weinreb Collection). The American Literary Manuscript Collection contains works by Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and Lillian Hellman. The Film Collection includes the David O. Selznick Archive, which has significant holdings from such films as *Gone with the Wind* and *The Third Man*. The famous Gernsheim Collection of photographs contains works by such noted photographers as Ansel Adams, Walker Evans, and Edward Steichen. Exhibitions of these holdings are staged on a regular basis. Permanent exhibits include a Gutenberg Bible, one of 21 two-volume sets of the Bible printed in 1450 on the first printing press with moveable type; the first photograph, produced in 1826 by Joseph Nicépce; and personal momentos (Wordly Possessions) from various collections that include Gertrude Stein's pen and George Bernard Shaw's letter opener.
Through Apr 6: "The Critical Difference." An exhibition that explores the influence of critics upon artists and their work as well as the give-and-take between the audience and the stage. Drawn from the center's Theatre Arts Collections. 7th floor Gallery, Mon–Fri 9am–4:30pm.
Apr 6–Jul 6: "Paging the Stage: British Romantic Drama and Its Spectacle." An exhibition depicting the gothic drama, historical tragedy, romantic comedy, comedy of manners, and melodrama that were contemporary to the closet dramas created by Byron and Shelley. 4th floor Gallery, Mon–Fri 9am–4:30pm & Thurs 'til 9pm.
Related Events (for more information, contact nuss@mail.utexas.edu):
Apr 10–Apr 12: "Romantic Drama in Place: Geography, Scene, Milieu." A three-day symposium sponsored by the English Department and the University Co-op.
Apr 10–12 & Apr 17–19: "Prometheus Unbound." The staging of Percy Bysshe Shelley's verse play, co-sponsored by the Center for Dramatic and Performance Studies and the departments of classics and theatre and dance.
21st & Guadalupe (471-7324). Hours: Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Thurs 'til 9pm, Sat & Sun 1–5pm. Parking available for an hourly fee in the Dobie parking garage located at 21st and Whitis.

Leeds Gallery

Tucked away on the 4th floor of the Flawn Academic Center, the Leeds Gallery is a satellite space for exhibiting selections from the Harry Ransom Center's enormous permanent collections.
Feb 16–Aug 7: "Yiddish has not yet said its last word: The Legacy of Isaac Bashevis Singer." An exhibit showcasing the life and work of this Nobel Laureate, with many displays of manuscripts, photographs, and even a haunted typewriter, drawn from the Ransom Center's Singer archive.
Related Events:
Mar 6–Mar 8: A Yiddish "Round of Pleasure." Entertainment at various locations in the Austin community, concluding with a "Selected Shorts" recording of

R. PEEPLES JR. ART SERVICES, INC.. PHOTO BY BILL BASTAS

Isaac Singer short stories. (Specific locations and times to be announced)
Apr 2: "An Evening with Tony Kushner." This Pulitzer Prize–winning playwright and author of "Angels in America" will speak on contemporary Yiddish Theater. Co-sponsored with the Texas Center for Writers. Hogg Auditorium, 7pm.

Lyons Matrix Gallery
Originally established in 1982 as venue for glass arts the gallery relocated downtown and broadened its focus in 1992. It now displays a wide variety of paintings and sculpture by established and emerging regional contemporary artists.
Feb 7–Mar 21: "Jim Janknegt: Suburban Interiors and Other Apocalyptic Paintings." With a style reminiscent of the cubists, Janknegt produces unusually colored paintings depicting the human figure within specific settings and situations.
Mar 28–Apr 25: "Robert Wilson: Glass Sculpture." Wilson, now in his eighties, creates ambitious cast-glass creations with a variety of themes and range of sizes. Currently residing in San Antonio, the artist travels to Murano, Italy, for several months each year where he works with Italian glass masters to produce his work. Opening reception **Mar 28** 6–8pm.
May 2–June 1: "Mother and Child." Exhibit of gallery artists focusing on the subject of parents and children. Including work from David Everett, Fidencio Durán, Philip Wade, Jim Janknegt, and Sally Chandler. Opening reception **May 2** 6–8pm. 1712 Lavaca (479-0068). Hours: Mon–Fri 10am–5pm & Sat 10am–4pm.

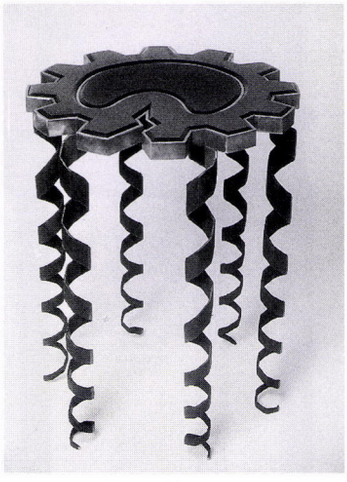
Mexic-Arte Museum
With a commitment to preserving Latin American cultural traditions and promoting multicultural art in the heart of downtown Austin, Mexic-Arte Museum rotates eight exhibits a year from its permanent collection with self-curated and touring exhibitions.
Mar 13–Apr 18: (Main Gallery) "Rosario Cabrera." A Mexican painter and printmaker (a contemporary of Frida Kahlo) who created artwork only between 1919 and 1928 but produced landscapes and portraits of such quality and with nationalist themes that they merited recognition from such greats as Diego Rivera and Alfredo Ramos Martinez. Cabrera is also noted for her impact as a teacher during the 1920s and '30s. (Back Gallery) "Marisa Nuñez." A contemporary Latino artist whose work combines images of purses with a sewing process in which actual stitches are used to "mend" the paper, creating a conceptual element that explores the combination and the symbolism associated with each of these ideas. Opening reception **Mar 13** 7–9pm (free). Admission during regular hours $2.
Related Events:
Mar 13 (during opening reception): "YoniVerse." An all-woman performance-poetry group based in Austin, will stage a 30-minute set of original work commemorating the life and work of Rosario Cabrera, the Mexican visual artist and teacher whose work is on exhibit.
May 1–Jun 6: (Main Gallery) "Art of Oaxaca: Rodolfo Morales—Juegos y Evocaciones." Organized by Arte de Oaxaca, this show consists of 59 works representing a 40-year retrospective of Morales' career and is the first and largest exhibition of his work in North America. Morales' paintings and collages reflect the familiar sights of his hometown of Ocatlán, Mexico, and are intimate expressions of his culture, dreams, and imagination. (Back Gallery) "Lisa Barber." A University of Texas MFA graduate student exhibits her ceramic installations reminiscent of altars that reflect her Catholic upbringing in Tucson, Arizona. Opening reception **May 17** 9pm (free). Admission during regular hours $2.
419 Congress (480-9373). Hours: Mon–Sat 10am–6pm. Admission: varies.

Pro-Jex Gallery
Owner Neil Coleman recently moved the gallery to the ground floor of the ArtPlex. The new location, in the heart of a growing arts district that includes many other galleries and artists studios, is still on the small side but allows Pro-Jex to continue exhibiting the work of both emerging and established photographers.
Mar 5–Apr 9: "Icons from the Pleasure Dome: the Magical Imagery of Kenneth Anger." Includes color film stills from some of the cult classics, including *Scorpio Rising*, *Lucifer Rising*, and *Pleasure Dome*, by this American avant-garde filmmaker who did groundbreaking work during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Opening reception **Mar 20** 6–9pm.
May 2–June 4: "Nude Works V." The annual exhibit with works from over 20 photographers, including Wade Jones, Check Holley, Roger Baker, Jack Rehm, and Neil Coleman, who each explore the nude human figure as subject matter with a variety of styles and photographic media. Opening reception **May 2** 6–9pm.
1705 Guadalupe #122 (472-7707). Hours: Mon–Fri 10am–6pm & Sat by appointment.

R. Peeples Jr. Art Services, Inc.
This is not a place to shop for a matching bedroom set. Instead, this contemporary design company focuses exclusively on fine artists who work on formal design issues, using high-concept, one-of-a-kind furniture as a medium to express and explore design as an artform.
Feb 12–Mar 21: "Metamorphosis: One Last Look." Exhibition of work by gallery artists including Dick Hedgepath, Daniel Kagay, Philippe Klinefelter, and Robert Peeples, Jr. This is the last official show before the gallery changes its hours to an appointment-only basis, beginning April 1.
1708 Guadalupe, first floor (385-3528). Hours: Thurs–Sat noon–5pm & by appointment only beginning April 1.

Scanlan Gallery—Helms Fine Arts Center
Built over three years ago as part of the Helms Fine Art Center at St. Stephen's School, the Nancy Wilson Scanlan Gallery is a small but impressive space that has hosted a variety of exhibitions over the past few years, including a number of solo shows by such prominent Austin artists as T. Paul Hernandez, Tre Arenz, and Sydney Yeager. Chuck Cooper is the gallery's new director-curator and is available for tours on Wednesdays and Saturdays.
Mar 28–Apr 18: "Drawing: The Basis for All of the Arts." An exhibit featuring more than 30 artists that documents with preparatory drawings the evolution and creation of a finished piece of artwork. Exhibit includes Ben Livingston's neon sculpture, Judy Jensen's reverse glass paintings, Jimmy Jalapeno paintings, David Deming sculpture, as well as work by cartoonists, printmakers, landscape architects, and architects.
May (exact dates to be announced): An exhibit of more than 30 years of artwork from the private collection of Chuck Cooper. Elizabeth Hansing, Chair, The School of Fine Arts, and Director, The Helms Fine Art Center at St. Stephen's, will be curating this show that includes not only contemporary Texas art, but also samples of works from all over the world and many time periods. The installation of collected works will be, in a sense, a single piece of art in itself.
St. Stephen's Episcopal School, 2900 Bunny Run (327-1213). Hours: Mon–Fri 9am–4pm & weekends by appointment.

Stephen L. Clark Photography
For more than 20 years, owner Steve Clark has been promoting artists and musicians in various ways. With half the ground floor of a historical Victorian house near Treaty Oak, he began promoting and exhibiting fine art photography over two years ago, with a focus on photographers from



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Texas and the southwest, including Keith Carter, Mariana Yampolski, Ave Bonar, James Evans, Bill Wittliff, and Randy Ehrlich. The gallery has access to collections of all national and regional photography.
Jan 24–Mar 7: "James H. Evans: New Work." Black-and-white photographs printed with a sepia-brown-toned process lend a sense of timelessness to these images from Big Bend area. Evans captures both the vast landscapes of West Texas and the more intimate character of its inhabitants.
Mar 21–Apr 25: "Kate Breakey: Slow Light." An exhibition of large-scale hand-colored photographs with starling beauty that capture both the strength and fragility of life. Breakey, a successful Australian artist whose work has been exhibited internationally, now lives in Austin and teaches at the University of Texas. Opening reception **Mar 21** 6–9pm.
April (exact date to be announced): Bill Wright: Book signing and photos of Abilene.
May 2: Mariana Yampolsky: Book signing and photos of Mexico and her people (exact times to be announced).
1101 W. 6th (477-0828). Hours: Tues–Sat 10am–4pm, Sun 11am–3pm & by appointment.

Tarrytown Gallery

Located in the upscale West Austin Tarrytown shopping center since 1988, Tarrytown Gallery is dedicated to supporting and cultivating local talent and regularly exhibits Central Texas artists. Although it focuses on landscape-oriented imagery, the gallery hosts a variety of shows with unique or unusual themes.
Feb 21–Mar 14: Recent works by Tim Price, a long-time patron of the arts in Austin. This exhibit represents the first public display of Price's paintings and pastels in which he works directly from his own subconscious in an attempt to discover the authentic self. Most of the work is figurative, some is abstract, and all is carried out in his unique language of expression. Opening reception **Feb 21** 7–9pm.
Mar 21–Apr 25: "New Works by Malcolm Bucknall and Barry George." Two Austin artists who create fantastical pieces that incorporate and transform animals as a basis for their imagery. Bucknall, who works in a traditional representational style, uses oil paintings, watercolors, and ink drawings to set a narrative tone in his paintings. George, on the other hand, creates sculptures in metal employing traditional welding and blacksmithing techniques to create technically well-crafted pieces of art in which he frequently incorporates found objects. Opening reception **Mar 21** 7–9pm.

STELLA BERNSTEIN, TARRYTOWN GALLERY

May 2–May 30: "Daniel Dove & Stella Bernstein: New Works." Each of these emerging young talents exhibits mostly paintings in oil with representational subject matter but with varying approaches. Dove, a recent MFA graduate from Yale, creates works that engage the viewer through dramatic compositions and strong narrative, reminiscent of Edward Hopper's powerful scenes of 20th century America. Bernstein, also a photographer, paints in a photo-realistic style, capturing sensuous botanical close-ups of fruit bearing plants on her smooth wood panels. Opening reception **May 2** 7–9pm.
2414 Exposition, Ste. B-110 (473-2552). Hours: Mon–Fri 9am–5:30pm & Sat 10am–4pm.

Women and Their Work Gallery

For nearly 20 years, this non-profit arts organization has sponsored, organized, and hosted a variety of arts-related events. In its new home for two years, the gallery contributes a vital presence to the emerging arts district just south of the UT campus.
Feb 21–Mar 28: "Drawings by Gladys Bel" include charcoal and ink drawings that are highly stylized and precise representations of enigmatic forms. These powerful and curious images are viewed by the artist as emblems, signs or and alphabet which explore personal and cultural experiences. Bel, currently a faculty member of the Houston Community College system, also plans to create a site-specific installation composed of a series of various-sized drawings. Opening reception: **Feb 21** 6–8pm.
Mar 25–May 9: Arleen Polite's energetic, detailed woodcuts, which draw upon her African-American heritage, will be on view in the gift shop area of the gallery in conjunction with the Linda Ridgway exhibit. Opening reception **Apr 4** 6–8pm.
Apr 4–May 9: "Poetry of Line: An Exhibition of Sculpture by Linda Ridgway." This work reflects a simplicity of form, emphasis on process, repetition of minimal shapes, and linearity of composition. Ridgway lives in Dallas, where she works as an artist, sculpting elegant objects from bronze, steel, and clay. Opening reception **Apr 4** 6–8pm.
May 16–Jun 20: "Toby Topek." Recent works by this Houston artist, who creates mixed media installations, often with ideas and subjects that have been recurrent themes throughout her 20-year art career. Opening reception: **May 16** 6–8pm.
Related Events:
May 16: Silent auction and tour at the Charles Moore House with proceeds benefiting Women & Their Work. Call W&TW for more information. 1710 Lavaca (477-1064) Hours: Mon–Fri 10am–5pm & Sat noon–4pm.

Workman Gallery (formerly Graphic Concern)

Nestled into a converted Victorian house in the West End shopping district for over 15 years, Workman Gallery has recently expanded and doubled its gallery space, which features a select group of emerging Austin artists working in a variety of media and styles.
Mar 7–Mar 25: "Sarah Higdon." New paintings by Higdon that whimsically portray animals in human costumes, often with a humorous take on historical classical-art themes. Opening reception **Mar 7** 5–7pm.
Mar 28– Apr 11: "Trevor Romain: New Works." A well-known writer and illustrator of children's books, Romain creates compositions in a deep shadow-boxed space, creating work that looks like set designs for the stage. Opening reception **Mar 28** 5–7pm.
April and May exhibitions to be announced.
1202 W. 6th (472-7428). Hours: Mon–Sat 10am–5pm.

Yard Dog

Located in a laid-back arts-and-antiques retail section of South Congress, Yard Dog exclusively exhibits folk art: non-mainstream, visionary, and outsider art of the American South.
Mar 11–Mar 31: "Southern Culture on the Walls." Selections from the gallery's collection of works by folk, outsider, and self-taught artists, including Jimmie Lee Sudduth and Purvis Young.
May 22 & May 27: "Works by Mary T. Smith." This exhibition will open on-line at the gallery's web site (www.yarddog.com) on May 22 at 5pm and will open in the gallery on May 27. Mary Smith (1904–1990), a native of Mississippi, has been recognized nationally for her paintings, most often done on metal roofing panels. This exhibit consists of unexhibited works from a private collection.
1510 S. Congress (912-1613). Hours: Wed–Sun 11am–6pm & by appointment.

On the Town

By Nora Coronado, Shana David, Ann Graham, Howie Richey, and Jacqueline Tieu

Music

Canada's noted chamber ensemble, **Les Volons Du Roy**, with harpsichord, organ, and vocalist, stages a feast for early music fans, 8pm **Mar 10** Bates Recital Hall, UT Campus, 25th and E. Campus Dr. (477-6060). Tickets $31.

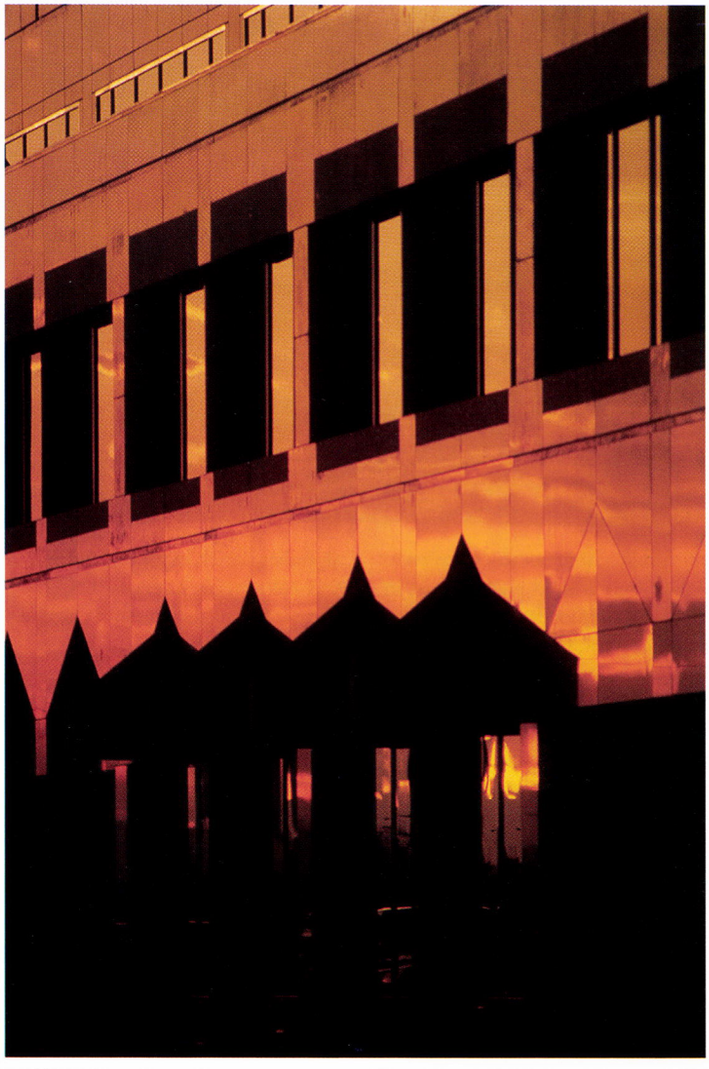
Rossini's entertaining opera, "**The Barber of Seville**," the season finale, is a light-hearted tale of love and war, 8pm **March 13–16** Bass Concert Hall, 23rd and E. Campus Dr. (800/316-7372). Tickets $10–90.

Two virtuosi powerhouses in one stunning evening: The world's most popular flutist, **James Galway**, joins forces with one of the world's great chamber ensembles, the **Tokyo String Quartet**, 7pm **Mar 22** Bass Concert Hall, UT Campus, 23rd and E. Campus Dr. (477-6060). Tickets $14–36.

Young, gifted violinist Anne Akiko Meyers is the guest performer with the **Austin Symphony Orchestra**, under the new music director/conductor Peter Bay 8pm **Mar 27–28** Bass Concert Hall , 23rd and E. Campus Dr. (476-6064). Tickets $12–26.

Japanese concert organist, **Kei Koito**, one of her generation's most exciting and gifted performers of Bach organ works, plays the mighty Visser-Rowland tracker organ, 4pm **Mar 29** Bates Recital Hall, 25th and E. Campus Dr. (477-6060). Tickets $12.

The **Austin Chamber Music Center** continues its "Intimate Concerts," in which experienced musicians play for a small, select audience in homes around the city. Each concert includes a reception with wine and hors d'oeuvres. Reservations are required. Seating is limited, but season ticket holders are guaranteed admission, plus a discount. **Mar 29–30:** The Anando Trio (violin, cello, piano, viola) plays Mozart, Surinach, and Brahms; **Apr 5–6:** Javier Chaparro, Kay Sparks, Hugh Sparks, and Art Kidd (violin, piano, bass, percussion, and vocalists) play a pops program in an historic residence in the Judges Hill area near downtown. 4930 Burnet, Ste. 203 (454-7562). Tickets $30/$27 members; season tickets $140/$125 members.



KEVIN VANDIVIER

The 140-voice **Austin Civic Chorus** performs the stirring "*Missa Solemnis*," which Beethoven considered his finest work, 8pm **Apr 2–3** St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Drive (454-TIXS). Tickets $12, $10 students and seniors.

The celebrated, internationally known pianist **Alicia de Larrocha** is guest artist with the **Austin Symphony Orchestra**, with associate conductor Timothy Muffitt, 8pm **Apr 17–18** Bass Concert Hall, 23rd and E. Campus Drive (476-6064). Tickets $12–26.

Grammy Award–nominated singer **Dee Dee Bridgewater** performs a tribute to the late Ella Fitzgerald, "The First Lady of Jazz," with pieces from her new CD "Dear Ella" as well as other songs, 8pm **Apr 18** Hogg Auditorium, East Mall, UT Main Campus (477-6060). Tickets $21.

Contemporary music chamber ensemble **Voices of Change** presents tomorrow's classics today along with a world premiere by UT composer Donald Grantham, 7pm **Apr 19** Bates Recital Hall, 25th and E. Campus Dr. (477-6060). Tickets $26.

The expressive, accomplished **La Follia** Austin Baroque shows how musical tastes change in a program by Handel, Telemann, and other popular 18th century composers who are virtually unknown today, 8pm **Apr 25** First English Lutheran Church, 30th and Whitis (892-1326/454-TIXS). Tickets $10.

Texas Folklife Resources present a one-time show of the heart-wrenching honky-tonk tunes of some of Texas' greatest singers and songwriters in "Huntin' and Cheatin' Songs of the Long Star State," which will feature a surprise lineup of legendary musicians, 8pm **Apr 30** Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress (472-5470). Tickets $11–15.

The **Austin Civic Chorus** joins with the **Austin Symphony Orchestra** in an vibrant performance of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 "Choral," under the direction of new music director/conductor Peter Bay 8pm **May 1–2** Bass Concert Hall, 23rd and E. Campus Drive (476-6064). Tickets $12–26.

The hip **Los Angeles Guitar Quartet**, substituting for the Geri Allen Trio, brings its "world tour" to Austin with works from Indonesia, Latin America, the British Isles, Bach, and Bizet, 8pm **May 8** Hogg Auditorium, East Mall, UT Main Campus (477-6060). Tickets $14–26.

The versatile and entertaining **Chanticleer** "Orchestra of Voices" performs a program of Mexican baroque music in a special concert for Mother's Day, 7pm **May 10** Hogg Auditorium, East Mall, UT Main Campus (477-6060). Tickets $14–31.

The second annual **Austin Chamber Music Festival** is two weeks of performances, lectures, noontime concerts, and workshops by local artists and internationally renowned chamber ensembles performing at schools and churches all over town, **May 24–Jun 14.** Call 454-7562 for schedule of events and ticket information.

Dance

Ballet Austin presents a contemporary adaptation of "Ulysses," a new ballet based on Homer's epic poem, choreographed by Lambros Lambrou, 8pm **Mar 6–7**, 2pm **Mar 8** Bass Concert Hall, 23rd and E. Campus Dr. (469-SHOW). Tickets $19–34.

The **Austin Symphony Orchestra** accompanies **Ballet Austin**'s full-length presentation of the romantic classic "Romeo & Juliet," 8pm **Apr 3–4**, 2pm **Apr 5** Bass Concert Hall, 23rd and E. Campus Dr. (469-SHOW). Tickets $19–34.

Dance master **Twyla Tharp**'s latest work is a combustible mix of sassy wit, sexy moves, and marvelous technique—"the finest and most exciting work to come from this or any American choreographer in a long time." 8pm **April 14** Bass Concert Hall, 23rd and E. Campus Dr. (477-6060). Tickets $14–36.

Part theater, dance concert, party, construction site, **Tap Dogs** is a rough-tough reinvention of tap dance for the '90s by Australian creator Dein Perry, whose show celebrates his roots in the industrial town of Newcastle. (Call for show times) **April 21–26** Bass Concert Hall, 23rd and E. Campus Dr. (471-1444). Tickets $22.50–42.50.

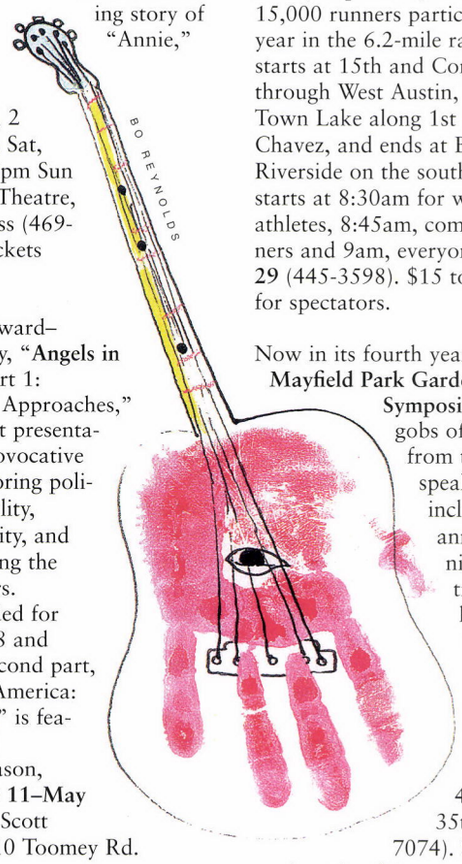
Theater

Live Oak Theater, in the State Theater next to the Paramount, presents "**Beast on the Moon**," an award-winning drama about loss, love, and healing, 8pm **Feb 20–Mar 15** Wed–Sat, 6pm Sun 719 Congress (472-5143). Tickets $15 Wed, Thurs, Sun/$17 Fri & Sat.

The Montana Repertory Theatre stages Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize–winning novel, "**To Kill a Mockingbird,**" at the Paramount Theatre, 8pm **Mar 12** 713 Congress (469-SHOW). Tickets $12–29.

Winner of the 1996 Larry L. King award for Best Play by a Texas Playwright, "**Down Along the Brazos**" is a heart-warming comedy by Ellsworth Schave **Mar 27–Apr 26** 8pm Wed–Sat, 6pm Sun, 719 Congress (472-5143). Tickets $15 Wed, Thurs, Sun/$17 Fri & Sat.

The talented Austin Musical Theatre brings to the stage the heart-warming story of "Annie," **Apr 2–12** 7:30pm Tues–Thurs, 2 and 7:30pm Sat, and 2 and 6pm Sun Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress (469-SHOW). Tickets $15–40.



The Tony Award–winning play, "**Angels in America**, Part 1: Millennium Approaches," is a two-part presentation of a provocative drama exploring politics, spirituality, homosexuality, and healing during the Reagan years. Recommended for audiences 18 and over. The second part, "Angels in America: Perestroika," is featured in the 1998–99 season, 7:30pm **Apr 11–May 17** Zachary Scott Theater, 1510 Toomey Rd. (476-0541).

Outdoors

Hard to believe, but the colorful Zilker Kite Festival is in its 70th year, **Mar 9** Zilker Park, (478-0905). Free.

An annual **Wimberley-to-Gruene bicycle ride** and camp-out, sponsored by the Austin Sierra Club, takes you over the Devil's Backbone, one of the most beautiful roads in the Hill Country, to pitch your tent on the banks of the Guadalupe on your way to Gruene Hall. Sag wagon and meals included. **Mar 21–22** (891-9643). $20 members/$25 nonmembers.

Moved up this year to March, the 20th annual **Spamarama** is a gustatory celebration of America's favorite potted meat that features an outdoor cooking competition, lots of live music, and the challenging Spam Olympics. Winner of the cook-off takes the coveted Spamamerica's Cup, noon–dark **Mar 28** Auditorium Shores, 800 W. Riverside (416-9307). $15–25 to enter, $5 to watch, children 12 and under free.

Join the throngs of serious runners, not-so-innocent bystanders, and zany also-rans, many in costume, for the state's largest running event, **Capital 10,000**. Nearly 15,000 runners participated last year in the 6.2-mile race, which starts at 15th and Congress, winds through West Austin, back down Town Lake along 1st Street/Cèsar Chavez, and ends at Bouldin and Riverside on the south side. Race starts at 8:30am for wheelchair athletes, 8:45am, competitive runners and 9am, everyone else. Mar **29** (445-3598). $15 to enter, free for spectators.

Now in its fourth year, the **Mayfield Park Gardening Symposium** promises gobs of information from three featured speakers. Topics include herbs, annuals, perennials, flowering trees, and heirloom varieties. Presented by Friends of the Parks from 10am to 1pm **Apr 4**, 3503 W. 35th (453-7074). Suggested donation $5.

For reggae music at its finest, check out the 5th annual **Bob Marley Festival** on Auditorium Shores, which features African, Caribbean, Reggae and world-beat music, an international arts and crafts fair, as well as a sampling of Caribbean foods. Wear your green, yellow, and red apparel in celebration of this renowned musician's contributions, noon to 10pm **April 4–5** (447-2382). Free with donation of nonperishable food items to Capital Area Food Bank.

If you're in town for the weekend, get yourself to the newly renamed Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's **Wildflower Days**. This year's theme: the Nature of America, with tours, demonstrations, and speakers **Apr 18–19** South MoPac Blvd. at La Crosse (292-4200). Admission: $3.50 for nonmembers.

Earth Day is a wonderful time to be outside for a celebration of Austin's nature with booths, music, educational and children's activities, and information from nonprofit organizations, businesses, and governmental agencies, all sponsored by Ecology Action 10am–7pm, **Apr 18** Waterloo Park, 12th and Red River along Waller Creek (303-0165). Free.

Don costumes and let down your hair at **Eeyore's Birthday Party**, the quintessential old-Austin event harking back to the 1960s when this was the hippie capital of Texas. These days controlled-substance smoke no longer wafts on the breeze, but the costumes remain marvelous, and the drumming circle is unsurpassed. Includes costume judging, contests, and just plain fun 10am till dusk **Apr 25** 15th and Lamar (448-5160). Free as can be.

Cinco de Mayo gets at least two separate celebrations, and both showcase *mariachis*, food, flamenco dancers, and Tejano bands to commemorate Mexico's independence from France. The first is **May 1–2** at the Pan American Hillside at 2100 E. 3rd (385-2838). Free. Second is **May 2–5** at Fiesta Gardens, 2902 Bergman (499-6720). Admission.

Live music wafts over hundreds of arts, crafts, and food booths that fill up several blocks of 6th Street (once named Pecan Street), and revelers party day and night during the open-air 20th annual **Old Pecan Street Spring Festival**, with festive musicians, artists, vendors, and revelers, all oriented to this pedestrian takeover of the pavement, morning through night **May 2–3** (478-1704). Admission.

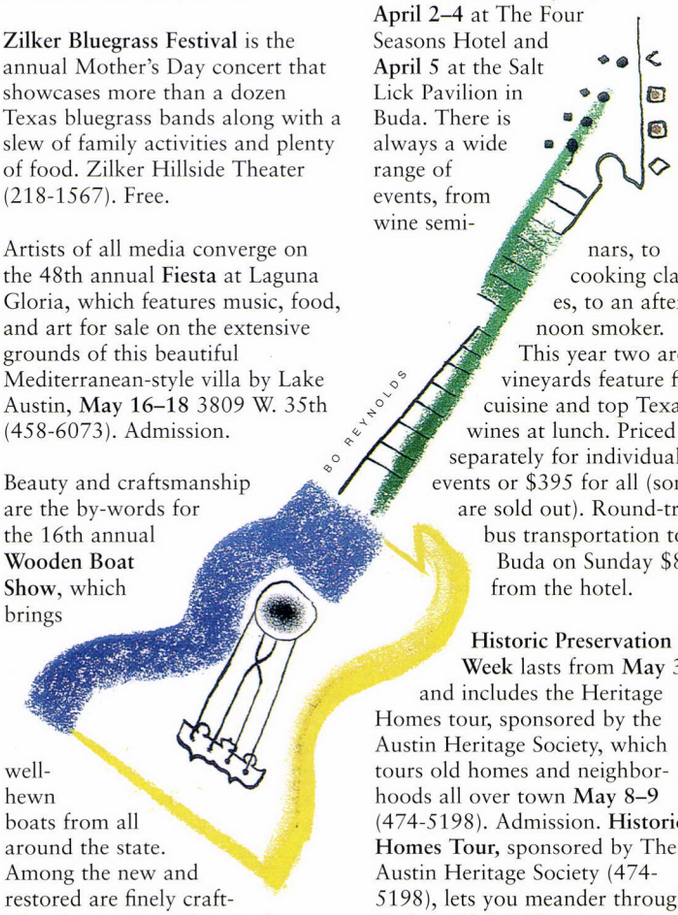
One of the state's largest flower and gardening gatherings, the familiar Flora Rama changes its name this year to the **Zilker Garden Festival**. On tap in the newly renovated Garden Center are scores of info booths, performances, and plant sales, which raise money once a year so that the garden center is free the rest of the time, open 10am–6pm **May 2–3** Zilker Botanical Gardens, 2200 Barton Springs (477-8672). Admission: $4.

The 21st annual **O. Henry Pun-Off World Championships** offer a chance for punsters to engage in clever wordplay and draw groans and moans from aficionados of William Sidney Porter with his well-known gift for wit. Youths as young as junior high students have shared the stage with veterans; only pre-registration, a quick mind, and courage are needed. Participate in the "Shaggy Dog Story" 90-second pre-prepared pun fun or brave the one-on-one random subject 5-second pun competition. All subject to Olympian judging. (Call in April to pre-register.) Bring a blanket and picnic to regale away a memorable afternoon and enjoy food, beverages, a

book sale, country-western music, and a surplus of good humor, noon–6pm or later **May 3** O. Henry Museum, 409 E. 5th at Neches (472-1903). Free.

Zilker Bluegrass Festival is the annual Mother's Day concert that showcases more than a dozen Texas bluegrass bands along with a slew of family activities and plenty of food. Zilker Hillside Theater (218-1567). Free.

Artists of all media converge on the 48th annual **Fiesta** at Laguna Gloria, which features music, food, and art for sale on the extensive grounds of this beautiful Mediterranean-style villa by Lake Austin, **May 16–18** 3809 W. 35th (458-6073). Admission.



Beauty and craftsmanship are the by-words for the 16th annual **Wooden Boat Show**, which brings well-hewn boats from all around the state. Among the new and restored are finely crafted mahogany speedboats of the 1930s and '40s. Attendees get to vote for their favorites, and as a finale the boats parade up Lake Austin, 9am–2pm **May 31** Oyster Landing Marina, 3825 Lake Austin Blvd. (288-0085). Free.

Etcetera

The SXSW Music and Media Conference is 18 years old this year. The music festival, which takes over downtown for four days, is now the country's largest music fest by having survived the longest. Our city's quirky answer to the Grammies, the Austin Music Awards (Austin Music Hall, 208 Nueces), is on **Mar 18** (467-7979). The SXSW Film Festival, which runs concurrently, appeals to an older age group that no longer has the patience for loud music and crowded clubs. **March 13–22.** Tickets to hear all bands, $60; Convention Center admission, $4.50.

The celebrated **Hill Country Wine & Food Festival** (329-0770), in its 13th season, features nationally known chefs, noted Texas and California wines, and many fine gustatory pleasures in this gastronomic extravaganza that has become one of the best national food events of the year, **April 2–4** at The Four Seasons Hotel and **April 5** at the Salt Lick Pavilion in Buda. There is always a wide range of events, from wine seminars, to cooking classes, to an afternoon smoker. This year two area vineyards feature fine cuisine and top Texas wines at lunch. Priced separately for individual events or $395 for all (some are sold out). Round-trip bus transportation to Buda on Sunday $8 from the hotel.

Historic Preservation Week lasts from **May 3–9** and includes the Heritage Homes tour, sponsored by the Austin Heritage Society, which tours old homes and neighborhoods all over town **May 8–9** (474-5198). Admission. **Historic Homes Tour,** sponsored by The Austin Heritage Society (474-5198), lets you meander through six beautiful old houses in the West End district, on the hill just west of Lamar and 12th. Evening street party and tour of the TMI castle on W. 11th Street, which is rarely open to the public ($45/person) **May 8** (7–10pm); self-paced walking tour of six different houses ($12 in advance/$15 at the door for a package of six) **May 9** (10am–6pm).

Kidstuff

by Ann S. Graham, who creates kids programs in her own neighborhood and keeps up with what's about town in the arts for all ages.

The new **Austin Children's Museum** at the Dell Discovery Center offers an excuse to bring the family downtown. Explore, discover, create, play, dream, and learn through hands-on exhibits, workshops, and programs for all ages. Serve up a plastic meal at the Global Diner, create junk art, hang out in the teen center (or hang upside down like a bat), toddle in the playscape, dismantle an old appliance or electronic gizmo in the "break it–make it" station, pump the organ pipes, or create a tornado. Tues–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 12–5pm. NW corner of 2nd & Colorado (472-2499). Admission: $3.50 over 2 years old. Free Weds 5–8pm. . Free parking SW corner.

Initiated in January of 1996, the **Austin Theatre for Youth** has quickly made a mark in presenting fully staged professional productions that engage and entertain young audiences. The final two productions of the '97–'98 season include **Feb 21-Mar 8**: "Rumpelstiltskin" (ages 4–7), Sat11am & 2pm; Sun 2 & 5pm, The Auditorium on Waller Creek, 41st and Red River; **May 1–10**: "Treasure Island" (ages 8 and up), Fri 7:30pm, Sat 2 & 7:30pm, Sun 2 & 5pm, McCallum Fine Arts Academy Theatre, 5600 Sunshine Drive (459-2289). Tickets: $9 adults, $6 youth to 18, $7.50 student, seniors, Austin Circle of Theater members.

Texas Folklife Resources probably does more than anyone else statewide to unearth, present, and celebrate the folk arts and folklife of Texas. They not only uncover the past but nurture the continuation and expansion of folk culture statewide. They have a rich array of programming year-round and across the state for all ages with an upcoming program of note here in Austin. **Feb 28**: "The Art of Food: Kids in the Kitchen," a food preparation and feast of traditional African-American dishes. Award-winning cookbook and children's storybook author Angela Shelf Medearis will prepare (and share the results) of such delights as Carver's Peanut Butter Cookies and Angel's By-The-Book Brittle and sprinkle in stories and tall-tales from the African-American community, 10–11:30am, Central Market Cooking School, 4001 N. Lamar (458-3068 to register). $10 per person.

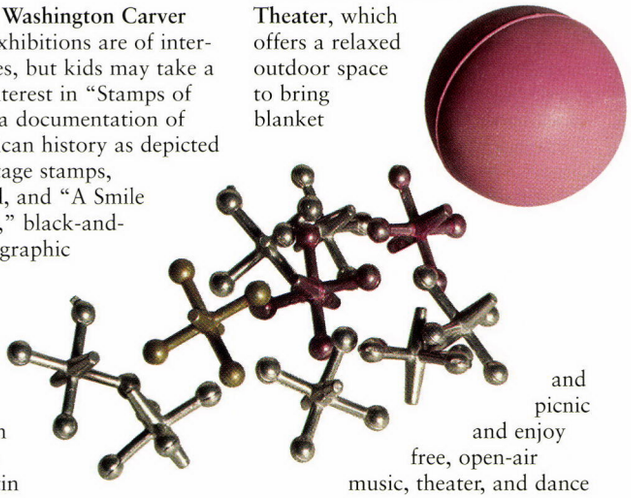
The **George Washington Carver Museum**'s exhibitions are of interest to all ages, but kids may take a particular interest in "Stamps of Approval," a documentation of Black American history as depicted on U.S. postage stamps, **March-April**, and "A Smile on My Face," black-and-white photographic works that reflect an honest and open expression of cultural pride as seen through the eyes of Austin youth ages 11–19, **May**. Hours: Tues–Thurs 10am–6pm. Fri & Sat noon–5pm. 1165 Angelina (472-4809). Free.

The first half of **Playfest**, Austin's professional festival of the performing arts for young audiences, wraps up with "The Tomato Plant Girl" **Mar 4–8** (ages 5 and up) and "Rabbit Tales" **Mar 11–15** (ages 4 and up). 10am Wed–Fri; 3pm Sat–Sun. Dougherty Arts Center, 1110 Barton Springs (454-TIXS). All tickets $4.50.

Mexic-Arte Museum, Austin's community-based museum dedicated to Mexican and Latino art, features two spring exhibits that are colorful, playful and accessible to children. **Mar 13–Apr 18**: Rosario Cabrera paints bold and colorful landscapes and portraits; Marisa Nuñez uses paper, pencil, and thread to create original compositions. **May 1-Jun 6**: Rodolfo Morales creates bright and playful paintings, many incorporating quilted fabric and metallic elements; Lisa Barber creates miniature, ceramic, shrine-like installations influenced by Latin American folk art. Mon–Sat 10am–6pm. 419 Congress (480-9373). Admission: $2, $1 children under 12 and seniors.

Homemade kites are the hallmark of the 70th annual **Kite Festival** at Zilker Park, **Mar 8**. Kids and grown-ups can aim for the highest, steadiest, most creative, strongest-pulling, smallest, most unusual, or largest kite, with pre-registration from 11–1:30pm, along with a demonstration of precision stunt kite show by World Wind Kites. Free to enter and to watch. Mar 15 rain date (499-6700). Admission: $2 per carload parking at Zilker Park, weekends and holidays.

Spring means the annual reopening of the **Zilker Hillside Theater**, which offers a relaxed outdoor space to bring blanket and picnic and enjoy free, open-air music, theater, and dance



programs. As summer approaches, more dates will be filled: **Mar 22**: Austin Barn Dancers, live music and participatory dancing, 2-5pm (453-7765); **May 10**: Mother's Day Concert in the Park with the Austin Symphonic Band, 7-9pm (345-7420); and every Sunday **May–June**: live bands programmed by the Austin Federation of Musicians, 3–5pm (call 442-BAND for the lineup). Admission: $2 per carload parking at Zilker Park, weekends and holidays.

"La Belle: the Mystery of La Salle in the Gulf," the exhibit highlighting the excavation of the La Salle shipwreck that sank in 1686 in Matagorda Bay, continues at the **Daughters of the Republic of Texas Museum**. But once it's gone, there is still plenty to engage young minds through this small museum that highlights the Republic era of Texas history. Apart from hands-on "great grandma's backyard" and a westward-ho wagon, there are fun scavenger hunts that have youngsters counting images of men with beards, numbers of cows and horses or determining who owned the first porcelain bathtub in Austin, **through Mar 28**. Mon–Fri 10am–4pm, Sat 11am–4pm. NW corner of I35 at Highway 183 in the shadow of 183 on the westbound frontage road. (339-1997). Admission: $2 adults, $1.50 seniors, 50¢ students.

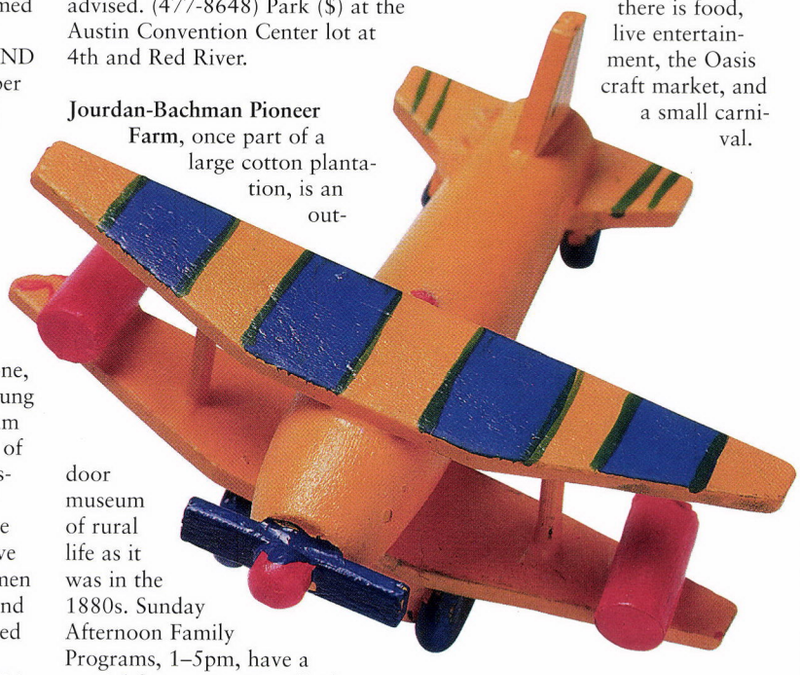
Paramount Theatre presents its popular **Kids' Series**, national tours of plays and musicals geared toward children, ages 3-10. The series often sell out, so call for availability before heading downtown with the family. And for those of you who have never been to the Paramount, every body needs a ticket. **Mar 1**: puppeteer and musician Norman Foote, 2 and 4:30pm; **Apr 25**: "Magic School Bus," 2 and 5pm (an 11am performance may be added). Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress (472-5470). Ticket prices vary per show and range from $7–16 adults, $3–12 children, 12 years and under.

The **River City Flyer** returns to downtown Austin after a winter respite, with two runs at 2 & 4pm Fridays, **Mar 13, Apr 3, May 1,** and **Jun 5**. Additional trips may be planned throughout the summer. This historic Southern Pacific locomotive, #786, once abandoned to an Austin city park, has been lovingly restored by the efforts of dedicated train enthusiasts and reintroduces the aura bygone passenger train travel. The 1-1/2 hour trip travels the byways of East Austin, continues north under I-35, and reverses near Highland Mall. In its own special way, this "heavy rail" harkens to the future of what and where light rail in Austin just might be. Tickets: $15 adults, $10 children 3–13; reservations advised. (477-8648) Park ($) at the Austin Convention Center lot at 4th and Red River.

Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farm, once part of a large cotton plantation, is an outdoor museum of rural life as it was in the 1880s. Sunday Afternoon Family Programs, 1–5pm, have a special focus. **Mar 1**: milk the cow, make butter, and prepare traditional custard pies; **Mar 8**: plant the spring crops; **Mar 15**: meet Mr. A the mule, the resident Jersey cow, chickens, and pigs; **Mar 22**: tour "Sally Giles' Garden" and Gus' cabin from "Lonesome Dove"; **Mar 29**: cook with a Dutch Oven; **Apr 5**: listen to storytellers and watch the whittlers; **Apr 19**: watch quilters at work; **Apr 26**: milk the cow and churn butter; **May 3**: watch demonstrations of 19th-century crafts; **May 10**: make 19th-century Mother's Day gifts; **May 17**: learn the art of making corn bread in the old wood stove and wheat bread in the Dutch oven; **May 31**: use herbs to make vinegar and herbal butters; **June 7**: set out plugs of yams. Sept–May: Sun 1–5pm; Mon–Wed 9:30am–1pm; closed Thurs–Fri for school programs. Closed Sat. 11418 Sprinkle Cut-Off Road (837-1215) Admission: $3 adults, $2 children 3–12.

The Downtown Austin Alliance's **Free Tuesday Noontime Concerts** at Regent's Plaza should be self-explanatory and are a great place to take the kids to listen to live local music and romp along, **April-June**. Pack a picnic and grab a bench, noon–1pm, Regents Plaza, NW corner 6th & Colorado (call 469-1766 for musical lineup). Free.

Go on a fossil dig, paint your own ceramic tile, make a candle or ride a paddle boat, as you explore Austin through time at the Austin Nature Center's annual **SAFARI '98**. One of Austin's largest outdoor family events, SAFARI '98 equates exploration with fun and if that's not enough, there is food, live entertainment, the Oasis craft market, and a small carnival.



10am–6pm **April 25–26** 301 Nature Center Drive (327-8180 x53). Admission: $5 per person; carnival rides extra. (Parking will be at a premium, so take the free shuttle buses from Barton Creek Mall direct to the front gate.)

While **Zilker Garden Festival** (formerly FloraRama) offers one-stop exposure (and shopping) to the wealth of horticulture from *Aristolochia* to *Zygopetalum* at Central Texas nurseries, kids may be more interested in this year's educational theme of "corn." They can grind corn, make and eat their own tortillas, pop corn, create corn-husk dolls, and even listen to stories about corn, 10am-6pm **May 2–3** Zilker Park, 2220 Barton Springs Road (477-8672). Admission: $3 adults in advance/$4 at the gate, kids under 12 free.

Nature

Howie Richey, the Texas Back Roads Scholar, leads nature tours and writes about some of the area's unique natural areas.

Zilker Metropolitan Park

If visitors have only a few hours to spend in Austin, take them to Barton Springs, a premier natural oasis in the heart of the city. Many long-time Austinites remember the springs by name, called Parthenia (the big'n in the pool), Eliza (Elks' Club enclosure), and Zenobia (downstream of the dam) for Billy Barton's three daughters. More than 26 million gallons of 68-degree water flow through the pool daily—the size of small lake. Also in this park complex are the Natural Science Center, with its wilderness trail and animal exhibits, the Trail of Trees, and the extensive greenbelt, which follows the creek upstream beyond Loop 360. Not far from downtown, the park-preserve is surrounded by urbanization, but you don't feel it when you're there. Barton Springs Pool, 2100 Barton Springs Rd. (867-3080). Hours: 5 am–10pm (except Wed & Thurs). Admission: $0.50–2.75. Austin Area Garden Center, 2220 Barton Springs (477-8672). Hours: 7:30am–7:30pm daily. Free. Natural Science Center, west end Zilker Park (327-8181). Hours: 9am–5pm Mon–Sat, Sun noon–5pm. Donation.

Mount Bonnell Area

An interesting contrast to Zilker is the top of this famous city high point, with its great sunrises, sunsets, and lake views. Here you can behold the city skyline, hills to the west, and flatter prairies to the east (but not the Capitol). With such a panorama, this breezy hilltop is often the site of weddings and meditations. On your way back down, stop in at Laguna Gloria, a branch of the Austin Museum of Art, with its spacious grounds and Mediterranean-style villa (formerly the home of Clara Driscoll, savior of the Alamo). Then take a short hike through Mayfield Preserve, once a private residence, and say hello to the peacocks and rock ponds, which the Mayfields built themselves. Mount Bonnell, 3800 Mt. Bonnell Dr. (327-8181). Laguna Gloria, 3809 W. 35th (458-8191). Mayfield Park and Preserve, 3505 W. 35th (327-5437). All free.

Lost Pines

Go east to experience the Post Oak Savannah, a transition area between the prairies and the forests, and the Lost Pines therein. This island of leftover pines, vestiges of a cooler climate, is like deep East Texas, an anomaly for this area. It surrounds two lovely state parks, which are connected by a winding road: Bastrop State Park is known for its comfortable

log cabins, reserved through the Texas Parks and Wildlife central reservations (800/792-1112); Buescher State Park has overnight camping facilities

with picnic tables, hot showers, and other amenities. Bastrop State Park, Texas Hwy. 71 East of Bastrop (512/321-2101). Buescher State Park, off Texas Hwy. 71 North of Smithville (512/237-2241).

Pilot Knob Area

In the shadow of the only extinct volcano around Austin, two public parks straddle Onion Creek, far from its origins near Henly, some 40 miles away. At McKinney Falls, it's as if the creek, reluctant to leave the Hill Country behind, draws it down to this transition zone bordering the Blackland Prairie. Named for an early settler, this is where Williamson Creek feeds into Onion Creek. Two waterfalls, shady banks, and semi-deep water make this a refreshing summertime swimming hole as well as a pleasant overnight camp. Moya Park, with its flatter terrain, is more developed. An especially interesting feature in this park, three miles downstream, is the historic one-lane iron bridge, which once spanned the Colorado River in the 1880s as a toll bridge. Pilot Knob, a low-lying volcano millions of years old, earned its name from airplane pilots who used it as a guidepost to Bergstrom airbase. McKinney Falls State Park, off U.S. Hwy. 183S (243-1643). Admission: $2 adults. Richard Moya County Park, one mile east of Burleson & U.S. Hwy. 183S (473-9437). Free (day use only).

Bull Creek Valley

The steep canyon walls of Bull Creek define the greenbelt and Forest Ridge Preserve near Loop 360. One of the largest preserves in the Austin system, Forest Ridge is part of the Balcones Canyonlands conservation area. It is known for an extensive trail system, hilltop views, and abundant birds as well as the connecting trail that meanders through the greenbelt along Bull Creek. But the park's convenient location means lots of road noise and many visitors. Following the creek below Loop 360 is a picnic, wading, and swimming area along Lakewood Drive, which is often closed due to high water. Bull Creek Greenbelt, Loop 360 South of Spicewood Springs (346-8705). Bull Creek District Park, on Lakewood Dr. Forest Ridge Preserve, 8000 N. Capital of Texas Hwy. (327-5478). All free (day use only).

Hamilton Pool-Westcave Preserve

Hamilton Pool, named for a former governor of Texas, is an awe-inspiring shelf of limestone with a 30-foot waterfall that empties into an inviting blue-green swimming hole. Now a county park, the preserve has an extensive creekside trail that leads under towering cypress trees to the Pedernales River. Down the road and across the Pedernales is Westcave Preserve, an extremely fragile area, distinctive for its blending of two ecosystems, which is accessible only by guided tours Saturdays and Sundays. Tours start at 10am, noon, 2pm and 4pm (210/825-3442). Donation. Hamilton Pool County Park, Texas Hwy. 71W to Hamilton Pool Road (264-2740). Admission: $3 (day use only).

National Wildflower Research Center-Veloway

You'll learn more about native plants in one hour at this national native-plant center than you could in a month on your own. Founded by Lady Bird Johnson, whose vision of beautiful highways led to an appreciation of wildflowers and native flora, the center has festivals, exhibits, workshops, children's activities, and demonstration gardens as well as a gift shop and cafe, which are open-year round. Don't forget to see the impressive rainwater-collection system, part of which is disguised as an observation tower. Down the street, the nearby Veloway, a paved, 3.1-mile trail for non-motorized wheeled vehicles, gracefully winds along Slaughter Creek, whose streamflow winds up in Barton Springs some 20 miles away. Helmet required. National Wildflower Research Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. (292-4100). Admission: $3–$5. Veloway (480-3032). Free.

Road Trips

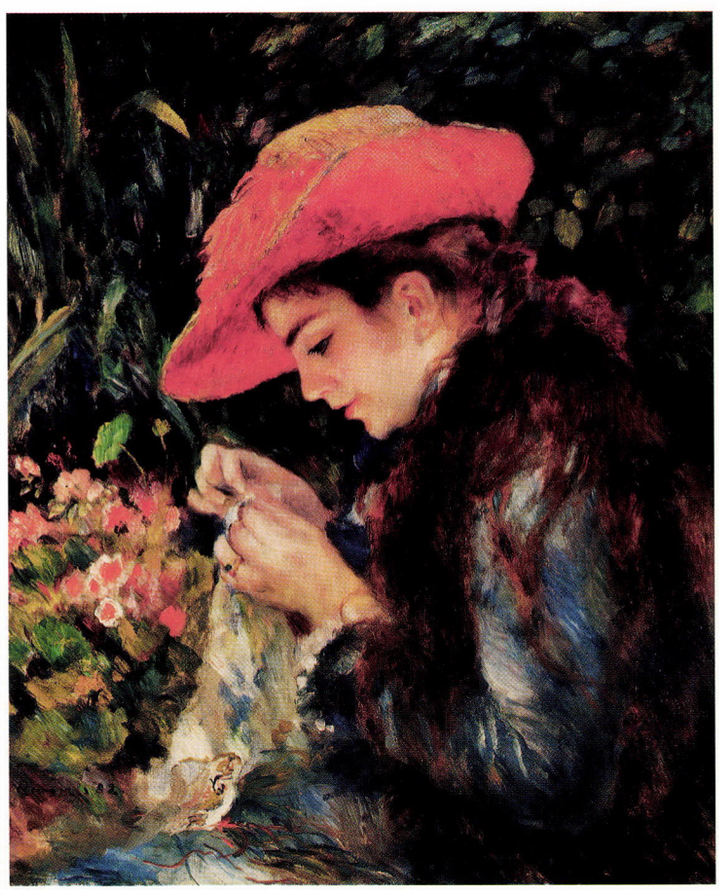
Burnet

The **Vanishing Texas River Cruise** shows you some of the best Hill Country views around in the comfort of a double-decker boat that explores the upper reaches of Lake Buchanan, the first in the chain of Highland Lakes. Mostly wilderness, the scenery includes three waterfalls, many canyons, and steep cliffs along with an assortment of hawks, herons, and other wildlife. Bald eagles spend the winter here from November through March. Bring a camera, plenty of film, and your own lunch for this 2.5-hour tour, which starts at 11am every day except Tues. With advance notice, box lunches are available for $5.25. Reservations required. A new 4-hour tour starts at 10am and stops at Fall Creek vineyards only on Sat ($26.95 includes box lunch). 13.5 miles up RR 2341 off Texas Hwy. 29 from Burnet (512/756-6986). $15 adults, $13 seniors, students, and military, $10 children 6–12.

Dallas

Film makers, movie stars, and enthusiasts from around the world gather for screenings and discussions of the best new American films at the 28th Annual **USA Film Festival** in Dallas, one of the oldest film festival in the country **April 16–23**. Highlight include sneak previews and tributes to writers and directors as well as leading actors. AMC Glen Lakes Theater, 9450 N. Central Expressway at Walnut Hill Lane (214/821-6300). Tickets available only through Ticketmaster (214/373-8000) for $6.50 ($20 for some special events).

Celebrated authors and playwrights read from their work in the popular **Arts & Letters Live** series, now in its seventh season at the Dallas Museum of Art. **Mar 13**: Oscar Hijuelos, author of the international best-seller *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* and *Mr. Ives' Christmas*, among others; **Mar 26**: Frank McCourt, 1997 Pulitzer Prize winner for the



PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR, KIMBELL ART MUSEUM

MODERN ART MUSEUM OF FORT WORTH

best-selling childhood memoir *Angela's Ashes*; **Apr 17**: Wendy Wasserstein, noted Broadway playwright, 7:30pm, Horchow Auditorium, Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 N. Harwood (214/922-1219). $14 general public/$12 members, seniors, teachers, and students (plus $4 handling fee).

Fort Worth

A comprehensive survey of California painter **Richard Diebenkorn**, one of the most influential American artists of his generation, is on display at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth **through April 12**. More than 100 paintings, works on paper, and other media span almost 40 years of his life, and many, drawn from the family's private collections, are being shown publicly for the first time. Hours: Tues–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat 11am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm. 1309 Montgomery Street (817/738-9215). Free.

A pioneering exhibition of the remarkable light-filled portraits created by French Impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir continues at the Kimbell Art Museum **through April 26**. Drawn from public and private collections around the world, **Renoir's Portraits: Impressions of an Age** are 65 celebrated paintings spanning the artistic evolution of one of the world's most renowned artists. Hours: Tues–Thurs 10am–5pm, Fri noon–8pm, Sat 10am–5pm, Sun noon–5pm. 3333 Camp Bowie Blvd. (817/332-8451). Admission: $8 adults, $6 students and seniors, $4 children, free for those age 6 and under.

Gulf Coast

The 2nd Annual **Great Texas Birding Classic**, an eight-day event along the Texas coast from Harlingen to Port Arthur, is the "biggest, longest, wildest bird-watching tournament in the United States." Teams compete for cash prizes, and communities along the way are scheduling lectures and tours for leisure birders as they wind their way north toward a final awards ceremony in Port Arthur **April 25–May 2** (389-4500 or 888-TX-BIRDS).

Hill Country

5th Annual **Fredericksburg Spring Real Antiques Show** draws 75 dealers from around the country to display their early country and Victorian antiques, jewelry, architectural antiques, and more, 10am–6pm **April 18** and 10am–5pm **April 19** Gillespie County Fairgrounds, Hwy. 16 S (830/995-2884). Admission $3.50 covers both days.

4th Annual **Fredericksburg Herb Festival**, which has drawn national attention, features live music, lectures on herbs, demonstrations, and vendors interested in Central Texas gardening, **April 17–19** Fredericksburg Herb Farm, 402 Whitney (210/997-8615). Admission: $3 for weekend.

Gillespie County Historical Society Founders' Festival trumpets the county's 150th birthday with a full day of live music, German food, live-history demonstrations, and festivities 10am–6pm **May 2** Pioneer Museum Complex, 309 W. Main Street (830/997-2835). Admission: $3 per person (ages 12+).

Houston

A major retrospective of the seminal contemporary American artist **Robert Rauschenberg**, a native Texan, continues in Houston **until May 17** following its New York exhibition at the Guggenheim. Each of the three major Houston museums—Museum of Fine Arts, the Contemporary Arts Museum, and the Menil Collection—survey more than 300 mammoth pieces of Rauschenberg's work from the late 1940s through the mid-1980s. The Menil Collection, 1515 Sul Ross (713/525-9400), free; Contemporary Arts Museum, 5216 Montrose Blvd. (713/284-8250), free; and the Museum of Fine Arts, 1001 Bissonnet (713/639-7300), $3 adults, $1.50 children 6–18, free on Thursdays.

Kerrville

The legendary **Kerrville Folk Festival** is one of the nation's top live-music festivals, featuring national and international performers just about 24-hours a day at a rustic rural ranch. Main Stage evening performances and afternoon children's entertainment at Threadgill Stage every weekend. All-night campfire jams. **May 21–June 7**. New Folk Concerts **May 23–24** and **May 31** Folk Mass Services **May 24, May 31 & June 7**. Songwriters Schools **May 26–28 & June 1–3** (advanced). Booking & Management Seminar **June 1–3**. Women & Men: Partnership Conference ($15) **June 4**, Quiet Valley Ranch, 9 miles south of Kerrville on Hwy. 16 (830/257-3600). Daily festival tickets $12–22.

Round Top

Dealers, collectors, and decorators from across Texas and around the country are drawn to the **Round Top Antiques Fair**, a nationally acclaimed antiques show now in its 31st year (and with many imitators) that has more than 300 booths at three sites, 9am–6pm **April 3–4**, 9am–4pm **April 5** Rifle Association Hall and Great White Tent on FM 1457; Antiques Annex and Folk Art Fair, 1235 N. Hwy. 237; and Carmine Dance Hall and Show Tent on U.S. 290 (281/493-5501). Admission $6 (good for three days at all three locations).

Early Music Festival at Round Top is a four-day weekend of classical music from **May 22 through May 25**, 70 miles from Austin, off Hwy. 290 East. Friday's 8pm performance features music from Spain, minstrels and magistrates. Austin Vocal Arts Ensemble performs **May 23** at 3pm, while Fort Worth Early Music takes the stage at 8pm. **May 24** features Texas Baroque Ensemble at 3pm, and the University of Houston Collegium is the closing performance at 3pm May 25 (409/249-3129). Accommodations in bed and breakfasts need to be made well in advance. Tickets $10, $5 students.

San Antonio

San Antonio celebrates Texas independence with ten days of carnivals, sports, fireworks, live entertainment, ethnic feasts, dancing, art exhibits and parades in **Fiesta San Antonio**, a 107-year-old, citywide celebration, that is also one of the state's largest and most enjoyable festivals, **April 17–26** (210/227-5191).

Fiesta Oyster Bake kicks off Fiesta San Antonio by dishing up 125,000 oysters anyway you want 'em along with 60 other food booths and continuous live entertainment: jazz to Tejano to bluegrass, 5pm–10pm **April 17** and 11am–10pm **April 18** St. Mary's University, 1 Camino Santa Maria (210/436-3324). Admission $5 & $8.

by Jim Comer

LAST WORD

KEVIN VANDIVIER

Two years ago last month, at the age of 51, I became a parent for the first time. This was not a planned parenthood. I woke up in Los Angeles to a frantic call from my folks' next door neighbor, who said my father was wandering up and down the street. During the next few hours, he suffered a series of small strokes. Caring for my mother, who has early Alzheimer's, had taken its toll on his health.

As an only child, I instantly became the designated decision-maker. For six months I flew into Austin most weekends. I soon realized that I couldn't do what needed to done from a distance of thirteen hundred miles. After a thirty-year absence, I quit my job, rented a U-Haul, and moved back to Texas.

Parenting my parents hasn't been easy. There are Medicare statements to decipher, hearing aids to adjust, and doctors' appointments to keep. Woody Allen says the most important thing in life is showing up. He should have added that you'd better bring along a good book. Today I understand how waiting rooms got their name. On call day and night, I remind myself that patience is the currency of love.

Dad has made a remarkable—and unpredicted—recovery. At age 88, he now walks ten blocks a day. Both parents live in a retirement home instead of a care facility. Dad makes sure mother gets to meals and doesn't wander. As a result, he has regained his sense of purpose. He also keeps close tabs on the Dallas Cowboys (and rejoiced in the departure of Barry Switzer). Although I bought his Buick LeSabre eighteen months ago, he eyes it carefully each time I drive up. He noticed a missing hub cab before I did. He still tells me how to drive.

Our days together are both ordinary and extraordinary. We have sorted through hundreds of boxes, donating truck loads to the local thrift shop. Although I persuaded him to get an ATM card, I have yet to persuade him to use it. Dad still surprises me with his enthusiasm. When I asked if he'd like to see *Titanic*, he called every morning at seven until I set a date for us to go. He loved the film but hated the drafty theater.

Mother busies herself watering plants on her floor, even the artificial ones. Her memory is fragile, but she still dazzles me with her wit. When told that a 90-year-old resident had praised her charms, she quipped, "Honey that's the kind I attract." Mom always wants to know if I'm working because she remembers when I was an actor and often wasn't. And she never fails to ask "How are you fixed for gas?" She probes relentlessly and FULL TANK is the only acceptable answer. There is an upside to this prodding: I haven't run out in over a year.

Like Queen Elizabeth, mother never goes anywhere without her purse, and she spends much of her time inspecting its contents. I once asked why she needed it in the dining room. Looking at me with genuine surprise, she said, "A lady always carries her purse." Over the last year, I've learned to go into my mother's world. I no longer expect her to remain in mine. When she wants to visit her long-dead sister in Smithville, I say, "We'll go next week." So far next week has never come. Despite dad's devotion and my best efforts, mother's universe is slowly shrinking. She no longer writes letters or makes phone calls. She asks me the same questions over and over. Sometimes I feel she's disappearing an inch at a time.

My view of life has changed immeasurably. I've discovered I have much in common with the engaging octogenarians who share my parents' lives. I see that dignity comes in a variety of shapes, including bent, wrinkled, and walker-assisted. I've learned there's no end to parenting—no vacation, no sick leave. I can't get on a plane and fly back to my life in L.A.—this is no cameo appearance. I am here for the long run.

Mother likes to tell people that Seton Hospital only charged her four dollars a day when I was born—and I'm worth every penny of it. I'll admit I didn't expect to be a retirement home regular at this stage of my life. There are, however, unexpected benefits: When someone asks how my parents are doing, I know the answer. I look at mirrors without flinching. And, as I walk into the lobby and see their eyes light up, I realize I'm in exactly the right place.

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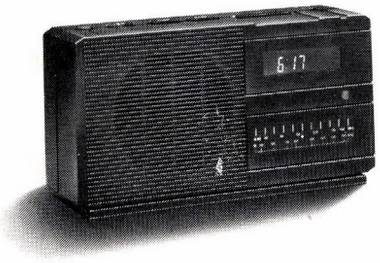

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